**A transcript of content from *(Critical) Blindness Studies : Current Debates and Future Directions***

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**Roundtable #5**

**Blindness Arts: From Art-Making to Access**

**Chair: Hannah Thompson**

**Moderator: Vanessa Warne**

**Speakers: Louise Fryer(Independent Scholar)**

**Rachel Hutchinson(University of Westminster, UK)**

**Sabine Gadrat(Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3, France)**

**David Johnson(Royal College of Art, UK)**

**Hannah Thompson** 00:00

Thank you, Vanessa. In case you're joining us for the first time, my name is Hannah Thompson. Like Vanessa, I'm in my very late 40s and a white, British, partially blind woman with thick purple glasses. We're going to hear from four speakers today. First of all, we're going to hear from Louise Fryer.

Louise Fryer is a broadcaster and audio describer. She is a leading practitioner and scholar in the field of audio description. She has been a teaching fellow a senior teaching fellow at University College London. And she wrote *The Introduction to* *Audio Description A Practical Guide*, which is now absolutely compulsory reading for audio describers. That was in 2016. And since then, she collaborated with actor Ameila Cavallo to research and write about integrated description in live performance. Louise, I'm going to give you the floor and you've got five minutes to outline your research for us. Thank you.

**Louise Fryer** 01:22

Thank you. Okay, so I'm a white woman in my very late 50s. I have short brown hair, which is going a bit gray and is badly in need of a cut. And I'm wearing a sage green top and a padded down gilet, which is black. I'm non blind, but I have impaired mobility. It's not really noticeable on Zoom but some eagle-eyed non-blind people might notice that when I gesture, it's only with my right hand. I'm speaking to you from Suffolk, which is in the eastern most part of the UK. And as Hannah said, I'm an audio describer. And I've been so for about 30 years. About 15 years, I went to a play with a blind friend. And both of us thought it was very poorly described. But well was that just our opinion, I had to find out. So I did a Master's in Research Methods in Psychology. And I became fascinated by two things: by blindness and by presence, which is that sense when you're watching a play or a film that you're not just watching something, you're really there. So I did a PhD and its title was “The impact of visual impairment on perception, experience and presence.” But it could equally have been called the impact of sight, on perception, experience and presence. Because I've heard a lot about how sighted people use vision. They use it to organize their perceptions. So the data is coming from their other senses, but they overlook contribution from other senses, especially hearing, touch and proprioception, that sense of where you are in space. And I think description does that too. So film will contain lots of information in it: soundtrack: dialogue, music and sound effects. Sometimes they need visual details added to make them effective, sometimes not. So if there's a clock ticking, we know it's a clock. But without visual information, we won't know the time unless it chimes. My research also showed that it's not only what the describer says that’s important; it’s how they say it. So people will pick up on their tone of voice, the pace, the pitch, the sense of urgency, what's called the prosody. You don't have to describe a character's facial expression. If they're angry, we can hear it in their voice. Blind people are experts in decoding prosodic information. Most sighted people are pretty good at it, too. But they assume they're picking up that information from the person's visual expression, or their gestures or what they're saying rather than how. And I think the same thing goes for the voice of the describer. If it is sensitive of the scene, it conveys more than the information in the words that it's saying. One battle I think I've lost is having audio description given by synthetic speech. So text to speech, for example, contains none of this paralinguistic element, and the description is impoverished as a result. As Hannah kindly said, more recently, I took part with a blind co-researcher, Amelia Cavallo, into exploring whether traditional description practices in theater were working. What we did was ask 20 UK theatre makers about integrated practices as an alternative to the traditional way of working, where the description is added at the end. Blind people traditionally listen on headphones, and that means other people in the audience don't know description is happening. And that's deliberate. It tries to disrupt the performance as little as possible. And I think it was interesting to hear Georgina earlier today talk about how she got a lot of information, because...

Translator: Excuse me, could someone ask Louise Fryer to maybe slowdown, because you are reading.

**Louise Fryer** 04:53

I'm really sorry. Yes. I was saying that I find it kind of interesting what Georgina was saying that she gained a lot of information from a couple of kids kind of playing with a sculpture they weren't supposed to be doing. They were disrupting the reverential silence with which we people were supposed to appreciate art. And I kind of think it's the same with description on stage. When it's open, everyone hears it, especially the director. And that means they might get involved in their description. And that helps everyone. I've also been working with documentary filmmakers on a similar approach, so that they comment on the AD script before it's recorded. And they might also tweak the soundtrack to list some sound effects making them more audible. Or they might decide to use different voices for the description, thinking about the age, gender, and ethnicity of the describer voice or voices. Essentially, they're being more creative. So the description becomes another tool in the director’s creative palette, like costumes, or lighting, not just something you had to provide to get your grant from the Arts Council. And lastly, and I think most importantly, I've been working with blind artists who want to use description in their own work, which again throws an interesting light on the prominence given to vision by sighted people. A partially blind dancer realized that all dancers develop an awareness of where they are in relation to the rest of their company without the need for looking, but words can’t help them all perform the steps with the same effort unless that effort is vocalized. And dance or circus skills are designed to look easy. Vocalizing effort changes that, another opportunity to disrupt the norm of spectatorship. A partially blind photographer views the photograph as a byproduct for sighted people. For her, making a photograph is about the process: arranging the subjects, choosing the exposure, it is not about the finished result. So, to conclude, blind people are oriented in time; sighted people in space. A blind photographer friend talks about seeing after the event, not at the time. She's the detective piecing the information together later, just as a researcher finds the connections afterwards, using hindsight. Vision is useful, if you have it. But we're multisensory beings for a purpose. If one channel isn't working as expected, others are available. Lack of vision only becomes a barrier in a world where vision is idolized. To sum up, sighted people should spend less time looking and more time being encouraged to listen, smell, taste, touch and move for the benefit of all of us. Thank you.

**Hannah Thompson** 07:38

Thank you, Louise. That's, that's really wonderful. That's really a wonderful introduction to the session and to your work. And you've raised so many really important and fascinating points which we will discuss as we go through. Your, your reference to sighted people spending more time listening is a brilliant segue into our second speaker, Rachel Hutchinson. Rachel is now a lecturer in Psychology at the University of Westminster. She is an interdisciplinary researcher whose work is underpinned by and situated in psychological theory and methods. And she is particularly interested in Audio Description as an inclusive mode of access for both blind and non-blind people. And last year, she worked with me on the IDEA Project, Inclusive Description for Equality and Access. And I feel like Rachel's a really good example of our legacy as organizers of these conferences, because she heard about her PhD, because thanks to Blind Creations, so she really is here. Thanks to Zina, who started the kind of conferences where, because of Zina, I met Vanessa and Marion. And then that led to Blind Creations. And so that led to Rachel being here. So yeah, Rachel, it's really nice to see you again. Over to you.

**Rachel Hutchinson**09:18

Thanks, Hannah. Thank you, you've totally pinched my opening lines. Absolutely. 100% right. So let's start with a quick description. I'm a white woman in my early 40s with blonde hair and black framed glasses wearing a blue top. And thank you very much for the invite. As Hannah said, it was Blind Creations that was my introduction to the field of blindness studies, which came as a, an incredibly refreshing and exciting moment after having spent a couple of years in and out of hospital when I lost the sight of one eye and obviously had been through the medical model experience of, of talking about vision to suddenly be kind of thrown into this world of hearing people talk about blindness in the ways that it was being spoken about at the conference was so exciting. And my first introduction to Audio Description was hearing Louise speak about it at Blind Creations. And when the opportunity for a PhD came up to investigate Audio Description in museums, I grabbed it with both hands. And I'm very grateful for, you know, for the opportunities that came my way as a result of this community. And it's lovely to be here, telling you now about the work that was done. So the work that I've done on audio description has been thanks to and with VocalEyes, and with Alison Eardley, who is also a lecturer in Psychology at Westminster. And, and really, what we were interested in doing was firstly, expanding the research on Audio Description in museums, which is a relatively under researched area. Most of the work on audio description, or a lot of it has been on screen, and relatively less in museums. And there are a couple of kind of key questions that that we were all keen to investigate. And the first one was whether Audio Description might turn out to have some benefits for non, for non-blind people. And, and, if so, what were the ways that this might need a kind of reframing or rethinking about Audio Description, and what might be the ways that it could be developed. And the sort of underlying challenge really was to the assumption that visual access to cultural experiences is in some way superior, that visual access is the best way to access and that if vision is lacking, then the experience is lacking and needs to be kind of plugged with an access provision. We were thinking about this differently -- well, what is the way that non-blind people, the majority of non-blind people engage in a museum well they might go in and wander around and spend, you know, 20 or 30 seconds at any given piece, whereas a blind or partially blind visitor might, might go and have an in-depth, sensory exploration or an in-depth consideration through audio description of one piece and spend several minutes or longer really engaging with it. And what might that mean for the kind of long term engagements of that person? So, as Hannah mentioned, my work is, is interdisciplinary. It's sited in psychology. We were coming at this from the theoretical framing of cognitive psychology. And one of the things that we were really keen to do is to think about what are the ways in which we can evaluate experience and the experiences that are facilitated through audio description? And there were two key things that we were interested in. One was engagement, and thinking about the ways that you can understand what engagement is; what does it mean if somebody is engaged? You know. How do we measure that since there's interest? Is it attention? Is it an emotional engagement with something? Is it all of the above? And, and one way that I think is a really kind of elegant way to get at this is, is thinking about measuring people's memorability because arguably, what people want is to take something away with them. You know, if they go to a museum, or if they go to see a play, they want to have a memory of that day, whatever that is going to mean to them. And I think that's what museums and theaters want as well. So, so we were thinking about engagement, and we were thinking about memorability. And, and, and so taking an empirical approach to measuring those things. So, a couple of studies that I just wanted to mention, and these are some of the findings that I shared through the website, that, that really brought out some exciting findings. So things that practitioners had potentially been, been saying, for a long time that we were able to bring some kind of scientific findings to demonstrate, say, well, we've, we've, we've managed to establish that some of this stuff is really happening here. And the first one was that that when we compared experiences that have been facilitated through audio description, rather than through a standard audio guide, or just looking at a piece of art, we found the audio description did enhance memorability for non-blind people. They had richer memories of what it was that they had looked at. And this wasn't just visual, visual elements of the art works, we were showing people photos, they had more thoughts about them, they had more feelings about them. So you know, that was kind of arguing a case for a more imaginative sort of engagement with this art that have been facilitated by the audio description. So it was really thinking about it as a kind of guided look, looking: what happens when you offer people the support to guide their vision? And if you don't, perhaps they don’t know necessarily what to do with it. What's the way in? Maybe audio description can give them that way. And another study that we did explored layering sound on to audio description, which again, is something that practitioners have done and we wanted to, to explore that. And we found that adding sound effects to audio description did make artworks more memorable for, for blind and partially blind people. So by giving people that kind of direct perceptual experience, they were, they were remembering as many of those artworks as non-blind research participants, whereas when the sound was, was not there, the non-blind participants were remembering more than blind and partially blind people. So it kind, of it kind of leveled the playing field, if you like it. It, it restored kind of equity, I think, in terms of engaging with that artwork. So, so what those studies did was they gave us a really strong place to kind of call for a repositioning of audio description, you know, from being seen as a kind of niche access provision, to thinking of it as a kind of inclusive interpretation that can benefit lots and lots and lots of people. And this is where it's, you know, we've since talked a lot about moving away from an understanding of access as binary, you know, you either need it or you don't. And actually thinking that people may need support and need access for all kinds of different reasons, that could be different at different points in their lives, that can be different from day to day. And this is something we've talked about in theater as well. I love listening to audio description in theater, if I'm sitting behind a pillar at The Globe, or if I'm finding the play hard to follow, like *Measure for Measure* where I haven't got a clue what's going on, audio description is even more valuable to me. And I don't need it for access, but I value it for the access it gives me and the engagement that that facilitates for me. So, so that's really, I think that's pretty much all I wanted to say on my research: it's about broadening our understanding of what audio description is and trying to think about it differently and thinking about it as a kind of inclusive art form and all sorts of exciting directions that that can lead us in.

**Hannah Thompson** 17:48

Brilliant. Thank you, Rachel. Just a reminder that after this session, we have a workshop where we're going to listen to some creative Audio Description and discuss it together. So that's, that’s very strongly related to Rachel’s work. I'm going to introduce our third speaker now. I'm going to introduce Sabine in English, just to make life a bit easier. I'm getting the sense that me switching from English to French is not necessarily a great idea. Sabine is trained as an architect. Sabine Gadrat trained as an architect, and is now a doctoral student in theatre studies at the Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3. She is also working with a theatre company to develop a system in the Nouvelle Aquitaine in France, to identify shows that are accessible to people with sensory impairments, and to set up a network promoting accessibility to the, to the performing arts. The issue of accessibility is at the heart of her research, particularly in relation to visual impairment. Whether it's a question of physical accessibility, or cultural accessibility, she is interested by the way in which blindness or low vision, or low vision, interact with the environment. Sabine, over to you.

**Sabine Gadrat** 19:33

Thank you but I think I've got nothing else to say. You've said it all. Indeed, I have had a long partnership, I would use that word, with blindness. So I learned the braille language when I was a teenager, when I was a teenager there was no braille on drugs. But I learned it by myself, by finding a braille alphabet, and exercising with a tablet and a pen, and then I indeed was trained as an architect. And very early in my adult life, I looked at the visual impairment issues and the difficulties to access, to move from one place to the other, especially in unknown places, and as an architect and as a trainee in architecture, one of the issues was how to build a place that would be more accessible to visually impaired people. So I looked into the multisensory aspects; I looked at different sounds, materials, the shapes of the building, the light, lightings. Very quickly, I, I realized by blindness was an opportunity to enrich the architecture project. And then we used a phrase, used by Celine, which I do like, blindness is like an emergence of a set of opportunities and I had that feeling from a very early age in my life. I, I am carrying out a PhD right now. So I'm a continuing student, so to speak; I've been a student for all my life. And I was asked to take part to this colloquium in 2015. Thanks to Zina, and thanks to Hannah and Vanessa, who have set up that great colloquium in 2015. I'm sorry about my voice. My voice is not that great. I mean, I'm very emotional. So you may hear that in my voice, if you hear the original French, of course, but ... I studied as an architect and I looked at the accessibility issues, and then looked at the different representations of blindness. During the course of my life, I met lots of visually impaired people, whether in France, I live in France; I live in Limoges, which, which is in the center of France. And therefore, I set up my curriculum, which took part in Quebec, and I met people there who were French speaking but from a North American culture much more than a culture, a European culture. And when I met these people, I realized that the representation of blindness over there was pretty different from what I could read in literature. And I was very naive at the time and I wondered, why we couldn't find people in these in the representation of the arts that could relate to the people you could meet in real life. Actually, I was faced with stereotypes, fixed stereotypes. So I looked into different writings and cultural writings, especially I looked at the different, of the decentering, but also of moving, you mentioned Jacques Semelin and Jacques Lusseyran previously, these French authors have inspired me very much. And I used their work to show that the perception of environment, the understanding of a place or a building, is not necessarily done with the eyes solely and then so now I’m doing a PhD. So I resume my studies. Well, I started my PhD five years ago. So I looked into description, audio description. But I question the way how this audio description is received, understood by visually impaired and blind people. So when you take part in an event, a show, a live show, especially, what happens? What are the feelings of the visually impaired and blind people, when they come and see, to use that word, a show, to share the feeling to have a social life, to socialize? So I was very interested in those issues, and I discovered through the research work I'm doing the work done by an English theatre company [Graeae], especially the term of the ‘aesthetic of access,’ which I’ve borrowed from the English, from our English friends, will know who I'm talking to, referring to, sorry. And we can use other terms, an additive, and we can, of course, the description can also provide more senses, more perspectives. So I'm looking at the theater theory of Alain Viala: as an audience, as social fact, as an institution, because in France, our culture is highly subsidized by the Ministry of Culture, highly institutionalized. Things are changing, but that is still the case. So I'm looking at different areas in France, so both the region of Nouvelle Aquitaine in the south-western part of France, where I work on a daily basis for the theatre company I work with, but also England, because I wanted to continue to explore the work done by Graeae and Chicago and, Chicago city in the US, lots of interesting theater companies in the US, working hard to improve the access of visually impaired people. I also looked at the experiences taking place in Quebec, where lots of authors were looking at the multi- sensorial aspects of things, also things are taking place in Quebec with regards to audio descriptions. So these are my current works, research work. But I am still at the very beginning of my PhD, so a lot remains to be done and explored.

**Hannah Thompson** 27:05

[...] What you said about the functional or palliative reminds me of what Georgina said before about the difference between functional touch and aesthetic touch. And it also brings me to our final speaker, David Johnson. David is another Blind Creations survivor. His, his work *Too Big to Feel* was exhibited at Blind Creations and also features in Georgina's book, I should say. He's a totally blind artist. He says he's an unashamedly blind artist rather than an artist who happens to be blind. In his art practice, he uses a wide range of materials and processes including concrete, plaster, found objects, and solids. He produces a wide range of cast objects, 3d print objects, assemblages, and installations, all of which provide, provoke, challenge, and upset expectations. He's at the moment is working,working on a PhD, working, studying for a PhD at the Royal College of Arts in London, where his practice-led research is attempting to demonstrate the generative power of blindness and disability in what I call, in what he calls ‘blind aesthetics’. So we did have a little test this morning to check that his audio is working. David, are you there?

**David Johnson** 28:42

I am. Can you hear me? All right. Wow, that's the biggest hurdle crossed. Thank you. Thank you Hannah for that introduction. Hi, everyone. I'm just going to get my notes up if you can just bear with me for a second. Here we are. Right. So. So yeah, I'm David Johnson. I'm giving a quick audio... blind person’s audio description of myself if I may, which I’m quite interested by. So I'm tall ish. I think well, I'm pretty tall, six foot of three. I'm a white male. I'm in my midst ... I'm in my extreme mid 60s. I think I'm gray haired and with a gray, possibly white, beard. My clothing is quite conventional, quite boring. And the material it's made from is quite interesting, sort of stretchy denim trousers which are quite sort of forgiving for someone of my age. And my jumper is sort of a horrible mixture of wool and synthetic material. I'm not sure of the colors probably. Probably blue or gray. So yeah, as, as Hannah said, my, my current research, I’ve come back to education sort of late in life, that I'm studying at the Royal College of Arts in London, where I'm doing practice-lead PhD. And I'm doing it part time, so I'm sort of about half, just over halfway through my studies. So the working title of my research is Blindness and Aesthetics: Beyond the Doubt of a Shadow. The main question I'm trying to address in my research is to what extent and what ways does art made by a blind person demonstrate the existence and potency of blindness aesthetic. So I'm working at the intersection of art practice, Disability Studies, and philosophy and currently I’m interested in phenomenology, but that seems to be shifting all the time, as does the relationship between those three areas of my interest. So I'm structuring my research at the present on, along the lines of three what I call apexes of thoughts. Firstly, a critique of the disabled / able bodied binary. So following David Bolt, disability is thought of as a continuum that we all inhabit, rather than the othering and polarizing of the binary that currently persists. Secondly, following Jacques Derrida, visuality is thought of as an innate human modality, called anamnesis, dependent more on neurological, psychological, and societal health, rather than the optical. Thirdly, visual art and visual art practice is thought of as a series of cuts or interruptions or commas that have little or nothing to do with healthy eyesight. So I'm increasingly aware that blindness privileges us and foregrounds certain experiences that are less prominent in other body types. My art attempts to express these privileged experiences. I'll now summarize some of those privileges; the most kind of obvious ones, really. In the absence of shadows, for a totally blind person anyway, there's a strong sense of how many differences, sorry, sorry, how many surfaces, how many surfaces become an undifferentiated continuum, where the relationship between above and below and in front and behind are ambiguous. Secondly, due to the favoring of sound within the blind experience, there's a heightened sense of a more panoramic reading of the surrounding environments, and less of an inkling, an inclination to focus on the front facing binocular reading of the surroundings. There's a heightened sense of the tactile environment, obviously, the ground under our feet, the clothing on the skin, [coughs] excuse me, the weather on the skin, the temperature, the texture and resistance, of myriad, everyday, proximal encounters. And finally, and this is a very brief overview of these experiences, a sense, that I'm very keen on discussing, a sense of the continuity of the visual experience, despite total blindness. By the way, I'm a person that acquired blindness, sort of midway through life in my thirties; I became totally blind in my 30s. In my research, I call this sort of this idea of, of continuing visuality, the unvisible, the unvisible, I just invented that word. So I'm now going to just share with you a few of my artworks and handheld pieces. I'll be, I'll be very brief and quick with these. So on the idea of the continuum of surfaces without shadows, a few years ago, I made a piece that sort of celebrated discarded chewing gum that I always came across, I’m sure we’ve all found this.

**Hannah Thompson** 35:11

David? Would you like to put your camera on?

**David Johnson** 35:13

Oh, sorry. Yeah, of course. Yeah, let me just do that, good point.

**Hannah Thompson** 35:19

I mean, actually, there's no reason why you need to you can describe them.

**David Johnson** 35:22

Do you see me?

**Hannah Thompson**

Not yet.

**David Johnson**

Right? This could be interesting.

**Hannah Thompson** 35:30

If you can't, I don't think it actually matters. I think in a colloquium about blindness, we can, we can do this without video,

**David Johnson** 35:38

You can't see me still?

**Hannah Thompson** 35:39

No, but I'd like you to describe your artwork.

**David Johnson** 35:43

Okay, here it goes. So the first one is called Inhibitions. All about discarded chewing gum, we've all found bits of chewing gum discarded under, under tables in public places. And it dawned on me that they didn't feel underneath the table to leave, the table underneath the table, because I can't see the shadows, these horrible bits of chewing gum became sort of less horrible and less hidden. So I made an artwork that celebrated that, so I've created little bits of chewing gum, pretend chewing gum, stuck under a table. It's actually silicone, they're made from, and I put them in a braille configuration. And I've written the word inhibition in braille in chewing gum. And that was exhibited a couple of years ago, in my student exhibition, and it was actually hidden, you couldn't, you had to sort of search for this, this piece under the table, hence the name Inhibition. Secondly, I've been doing a lot of 3D printing work in a college so using the resources of the college, and I've produced a piece called Transient Objects -Transient Objects caught in a Multi-Dimensional Moment of Impossible Pringles. This is about the moment of touch. I wish I could show you this, but I'll describe it instead. It's a sort of skeletal mug, just an ordinary coffee mug that's, that remains just a skeleton. And on the skeleton of the mug are our five pringle shaped ovals that represent the touch points of your fingers when you when you hold an ordinary mug. And when you ... as a blind person, in particular, when your fingers alight on an object that's very familiar, like a coffee mug, you instantly recognize it for what it is just on those moments of touch, they are very much a momentary record, moments of recognition. So I attempted that with this sculpture, which I'm holding in my hand now, and I'm just placing my fingers on the points of touch. I can't feel the rest of the mug, but I know it's there. And it's sort of implied by the points of touch, hence, it feels like, very much a transient thing hence the name transient object, it's got a sort of temporal feel to it. Final, the final piece I wanted to talk about was a sound work that I've done called Alarming Proximity. This is where I placed four proximity sensors in a square, a four meters square. And the visitor stands in the middle of that square, or is invited to stand in the middle of the square. And as the person approaches any of the four proximity sensors, there's also a sound generator attached to each of the proximity sensors that generates a musical phrase, as you move closer to the, any of the four, that musical phrase starts sounding faster, and the ones you're moving away from sounds slower, so that you're, so as you move around the square, there is this kind of chaotic music going on, it gets faster and faster. As you get closer to the proximity sensors and slower and slower as you get further away from the other ones. Chaos ensues. And you are as the body in the square, choreographing, conducting as it were, the sound so the sound is responding to, the music is responding to your body position. And that again, I feel is a blind aesthetic moment because as you walk, as I walk around, in life, sound seems to sort of follow me around in a way sort of, even a distant sound seems somehow part of my body in the way that I'm trying to express with that piece, Alarming Proximity. And that's where I think I'll finish.

**Hannah Thompson** 39:57

Brilliant, thank you. Thank you so much, David. Um, I, I'm in the, in the work that you submitted to the website, you, you included images, didn't you? So anyone can go and look. Oh, yeah.

**David Johnson** 40:11

So there are also images available. Yes, that's right. Yeah.

**Hannah Thompson** 40:15

And it was just a general reminder to everyone that everyone has, has uploaded much longer versions of their work to be to be accessed whenever people want to. I ... There are some wonderful connections between the four of you. Things that jumped out at me when I when I listened to you, and when I read your work, is that first of all, is that David has outlined for us a Blind Aesthetic. And he is a blind creator; Rachel, Louise, and Sabine are interested in making audio description, more aesthetic, and more relevant, more, more part of the creative process, I would argue in different ways. So I'd like, I'd like us to discuss how we might take David's Aesthetic and use it in other Arts. So we'll come back to that. David and Louise both mentioned, the, the work of the brain, and the relationship between the brain and the eyes and how, I know this is also this also happens in Rachel's work, that what we see is, is not necessarily about the mechanisms of the eye. And we also looked at this yesterday, it's about cultural and social and historical understandings of how, how to look. So I think that's something we could fruitfully discuss in terms of how we can mobilize that to improve access to the Arts. And then, I think, something that I know Louise, has, has thought about, and I think also David, is this idea of access as something bidirectional. And this also relates to Rachel, Rachel's work and Sabine’s work. So what can access created by blind people do for non-blind people? And what can access for blind people also do for non-blind people? So, I'd like to, I'd like to go first to Louise, to ask you about what, yeah, whether you have thoughts about David’s, about blind aesthetics, and its relationship with how you approach the Arts.

**Louise Fryer** 43:07

I think blind aesthetics is a fascinating area, because we are so conditioned to thinking about aesthetic being a visual quality. And it's simply not at all; it doesn't have to be. So I think, to have someone who's creating artworks with blindness at the center of them, is really helpful to explain to non-blind people, why aesthetics don't have to be about the look of something. And I think it relates very strongly to theatre, with the idea that having people with disabilities on stage changes the aesthetic. So I think the aesthetics of disability just has so much to offer, in terms of viewing things differently, which I think is what art is about really.

**Hannah Thompson** 43:59

Yeah, thank you. Actually, David, in his submission, he referenced Tobin Sieber’s Aesthetics of Disability. And there's this whole kind of, you know, reversing or changing notions of kind of perfection and beauty through, through, through visible disability. Sabine, do you, do you think that a blindness aesthetics could help audio description or improve the way it's created in France?

**Sabine Gadrat** 44:36

In terms of audio description in France, there are things that are changing in the terms of the law, particularly in terms of description of everything that is television and cinema. A lot of things have come out recently, at the end of the last year, I believe, where it is now. Already, some people were working with re-readers in order to ensure that the audio description was fluid in the story, and that one could understand everything of the story and that there was nothing redundant. What Louise was saying earlier are some of the things that we hear in the voice and the expression that we did not need to re describe for it to be understood. Today, there's going to be a generalization of a way of working as audio descriptors, with re-readers, seeing, sighted or not, who will be trained professionals. This problem is also, we are maybe getting away from our subject, but the professionalization of disabled people is sometimes quite complicated, particularly in France. I think that it would be something good. In my work, I've always considered it as something great to work on several levels, not just with sight. I think that it can only contribute something good in our way of perceiving a work of art and creating an audio description as well.

**Hannah Thompson** 46:15

[...] that realization of a blind, or, in fact, disabled people who are often asked to help, to advise, and to give kind of free labor. There's a very, I personally struggle a lot with the balance between fair and remuneration, and making and the kind of “Nothing about us without us,” you know, everything needs to be created in consultation and people need to be fairly reimbursed for their labor. That's, this is very off topic. Rachel, do you think, just coming, coming to Rachel, blind aesthetics: did you take account in your experiments, for example, did you think about aesthetics of the texts that you were, that people people were listening to, or was it more about the facts of listening rather than not listening?

**Rachel Hutchinson** 47:21

You cut out a bit, Hannah. But I think the question was, did we think about the aesthetics of the text in the experiments? Yes, we did. And for particular reasons that were driven by cognitive psychology. So one aspect that we were particularly interested in was the multisensory nature of language and the ways that you can embed multisensory imagery in language, which I think gives it a very particular aesthetic appeal and aesthetic experience. And, you know, what the theory of cognitive psychology tells us is that that is going to give people more kind of hooks, more ways in to a subject matter and is likely to promote better memorability. So, you know, if you are describing a photograph of a market scene, talking about the sounds, potentially the smells, you know, non-visual imagery in the description was something that we were very, very interested in trying to do, because that's what we were hearing from audio describers in museums, is that this was part of good practice. But I think that has a very particular aesthetic quality, and actually, just kind of anecdotally, a lot of feedback that I got from our non-blind participants was that they really, really enjoyed the language of the descriptions and they, they enjoyed the, this multi-sensory nature of that, and it made them feel as though they were there. We didn't measure presence, Louise, but I kind of wish we had, and that's something we are building into other work that we're doing at Westminster now. But, but it, it was a case of bringing things to life and, and making people feel as though they were there in that moment, and almost transported to another place and another time. So I think that some of the kind of the well-established techniques of audio description have got huge aesthetic appeal. I think there's a beauty in language, you know, is, there's a beauty and listening to a poetically crafted and beautifully written description that for me has an aesthetic appeal that can be, you know, can go beyond what I'm able to visually extract from a painting potentially. So, so yeah, I don't know if that answers your question, but that's my kind of reaction to it.

**Hannah Thompson** 49:44

So that's brilliant. I'm going to pass over to the moderator in a few minutes to take some questions, but I just want to ask all of you, because this is really what we're focusing on in the conference is, is your, how you how you feel about the notion of Critical Blindness Studies or Blindness Studies itself. And I want to start with Rachel, because when I read your article that you submitted, that I really think everyone should read. It's open access and there's a link via the website. I was I was really struck by how scientific it is. I mean, it's, it's a psychology article. And it's very, like, there's all kinds of like, really solid science in there, which I'm not used to dealing with at all. The question for Rachel is, do you think there's a place for the kind of hard science in Critical Blindness Studies? What are the what are the kind of disadvantages and advantages of, of that?

**Rachel Hutchinson** d50:47

I think there is a place, I think it's a place that has to be viewed critically, and will be and should be challenged, and, and will need to defend itself. So I'll give you an example. When you are constructing an experiment with the sort of, you know, the very positive goal of wanting to provide findings that are to some extent generalizable, go beyond a particular experiment, then as a need to, to categorize or to, you know, to group participants, which can go against the grain a little bit for, for some of us as researchers. So, for example, in my study, and some of the work that I've done, it was a difficult thing to decide how to how to balance my understanding that the diversity of, of experiences of blindness, and the many, many different, you know, the fact that that people could have had vision for most of their lives and become blind within the last couple of years, or the fact that they could be congenitally blind or, the fact that they may have some vision in some days in some weather and not on other days, with the pragmatics of experimental design where you need to create groups, and you need to explain what those groups are. So it's a kind of a pragmatic sort of way into that I was thinking about well, would people would people want to have access to audio description in a museum? Would their, would their experience of blindness lead them to want to have access to audio description in the museum? If yes, then, then that is a kind of a pragmatic justification. But, but, it's, it's a difficult, it's a difficult one. And it is balancing that awareness of the variability of experience and the value of the variability of experience, and yet, ultimately needing to control your variables and needing to harness them in order to make an experiment work. So I think that, you know, I think that the kind of the short answer is that, yes, I think there's a place; yes, I think there's a value in bringing the kind of empirical rigor to this field of Blindness Studies. But I think it's, it's something that needs to be critically reviewed and reflected upon, and thinking about what that means and, and yeah, thrown out into the public forum so I'm glad that you, that you've asked that question.

**Hannah Thompson** 53:25

Thanks, Rachel. I hadn't thought of this, this issue of categorizing and grouping and how science or the scientific community, the kind of peer reviewing community, demands that. But it does kind of go against everything we've said, since the beginning of the conference, about definition. And, Louise, can you tell us a bit more about your definition of blindness?

**Louise Fryer** 53:52

Yes, my definition of blindness has been very much changed over the years, I think, is the best way of putting it. So I guess, what I think, is that it's about people who don't use vision as their primary way of navigating the world. So I kind of feel that, in all, because we put up so such a visual way of experiencing the world as the kind of norm, then blind people need access to the image to be able to navigate this very visual world. So it's people who don't, yeah, people who don't use vision as their primary way of engaging with the world.

**Hannah Thompson** 54:42

That's great. I really like that definition. I love the way in your, in your submission, you said yeah, people who, who want or need access to images and I just think, yeah, let's turn it around. Let's, let's make it about the way society is constructed, not about the way people are constructed. Sabine can you describe your relationship with Critical Blindness Studies?

**Sabine Gadrat** 55:13

I don't really know how to position myself on this point. What I was saying earlier is that I have a long relationship with what I called visual deficiency with, which includes all the whole spectrum between people who have a partial vision and people who are in complete blindness. It's obvious that there's such a variety of situations. And furthermore, taking account of the moment when, this fact is going to step, is going to affect people's lives, like at birth, when you're small, when you're young, when you reach adulthood, we don't have the same experiences. I started working with blindness, coming from the legal definition of the World Health Organization, because it was necessary to start with something that, something rather than nothing, it's more of the definition of blindness. I don't really know how to position myself, honestly, with regards to the critical studies of blindness, the critical approach of blindness studies, and what I am interested in in this way of working is that we're, we're interested in the person not just an image or representation of the person or an idea of the person, an idea of blindness. I've always worked with-- very quickly, I started asking people who were really concerned by the question of blindness, because I could not put myself in their place. And I could not take decisions instead of, in their place. For me, it was important, and that brought to the fore certain aspects and things that I would, maybe we wouldn't have thought of, as researchers who aren't directly concerned by blindness, or, or, or lack of sight.

**Hannah Thompson** 57:23

There is I think a cultural difference between France and England, as well, in the in the way of thinking about blindness, kind of historical cultural differences. David, can you can you talk to us about your-- because your definition, David, of blindness is visual in a way…

**David Johnson** 57:46

Yeah, yeah. I think my I'm sort of shifting, well, I vacillate, I mean, I think like, it's that like the word aesthetics. I think it's essentially a huge abyss between, you know, what we all seem to agree on what aesthetics means, amongst the four of us, also most of the people I've heard at this conference, but, and yet, when you go out into that sort of street, as it were, and talk to people about blindness, they have a very sort of narrow view of what it really is, and as well as the word aesthetics. And it's, I'm interested in the gap between what we all agree on and what everyone else or the person in the street seems to latch on to. So I think, like we were saying yesterday, I think for blindness, it's very complex. It's an incredibly complex phenomenon. Pinning it down to one narrow definition is dangerous and uninformative. So, I think, in my response to your question, as first put to me, I wanted to keep visuality in the definition of blindness, because I don't, for me, personally, and I think it's been expressed on a number of occasions of our two days, in the last couple of days, that visuality doesn't leave you when you go blind. I don't think visuality is lost to you if you are born blind either. So, so there we are. That's a very fuzzy response. Sorry.

**Hannah Thompson** 59:38

No, no, I mean, I think what we're learning in the, in the conference, is that, of necessity, definitions need to be plural, and, and fuzzy, because that's what we're dealing with. And, in fact, you know, we don't want to knock anything down.

**David Johnson** 59:55

No, and I'm sorry if I could just ... I, like I think Georgina says, I've learned to be blind. I've learned about blindness as I've gone blind and I think everyone needs to learn it, whether you're blind or, or not. So it's maybe an educational thing. Maybe it's just knowledge that needs to be imparted very early on in the education system about the, you know, the complexity of, of disability in general. It should start, I think it is in a lot of schools, it’s being taught very well, I think. But there's still a long way to go.

**Hannah Thompson** 1:00:33

We’re back to blindness as teacher from, from yesterday, and also, what we were talking about earlier about, you know, teaching children to live by touch. Yeah, absolutely.

**David Johnson**

And that’s where art can come in.

**Hannah Thompson**

Yeah, that's, that's- yeah, absolutely. That's such a good point. And I would just say that I think blind, blind living is an art. That's that you have to you have to learn and acquire and yeah, let's, let's celebrate it. I'm going to pass over to Vanessa. Well, I'm going to, I’m going to thank our four speakers, and invite Vanessa to take some questions from the floor.

**Vanessa Warne** 1:01:14

Thank you very much, Hannah. And thank you to our four speakers. I will be monitoring the Google doc should you wish to answer, ask a question or offer a comment there. And I will also watch for hands up. Before or while you're gathering your thoughts, to the audience I speak, I just want to say hello to everyone here and say this feels like a joyful long-distance reunion, as well as a valuable intellectual exercise for me. So thank you all; it is lovely to reconnect in this way, and to share time and space with you. I also want to do some resource sharing, if I may do that, in my role as moderator and I have been thinking, of course, along with you about audio description in the space of the theater, in the space of the gallery in terms of architecture, specific works of art. David, gave us such a wonderful example of audio description of his own work today. But I'm also thinking of learning and of audio description in the classroom. And I just wanted to take this opportunity to nod to Georgina Kleege, and Scott Wallin, spelt W A L L I N, their work on audio description as pedagogical tool which is open access and available through *Disability Studies Quarterly*. It’s really shaped my own classroom practice. And I am in the company of many teachers and so I share that today. And then I also want to in terms of resource sharing, to acknowledge the extraordinary work of the *Audio Description: The Art of Access* course, through Royal Holloway and VocalEyes. I am a proud graduate of that course. And I have, of course, Hannah Thompson and Rachel Hutchinson, to thank for this, and also Louise Fryer who was one of the guest teachers, and I direct those of you interested in beginning a journey in audio description as a blind or a non-blind person to this immensely valuable resource, which is free and online. So I am learning and I have done some learning in your company in the past. So thank you all.

I'm monitoring for questions but I am glad to have this selfish moment to myself, because I have a question for Louise and Rachel first about time. And then a question for Sabine and David about sound if I have that chance. And so Louise and Rachel, this is not a new topic in any way, but of course, an important one. And I'm thinking about the time of audio description, and the value of that time. And Rachel, you really brought that to the fore. I think I tend to think about time in terms of the description of the performing arts, Louise, but Rachel brings it to the fore by talking about how audio description in the museum space slows down the non-blind person's engagement and invites time to be experienced differently. So Louise, and Rachel, I'm not sure who would like to go first. But could I ask you to comment on this always, I think, relevant and always changing question about time in relationship to the work, to the adventure, to the art of audio description.

**Louise Fryer** 1:04:44

I can speak, Rachel, and you can chip in. I think time is really interesting in relation to description and live arts, let's say. So live performance. Because with the idea of not disrupting the performance, the idea is that you can only speak when nobody else is speaking. And so it's a massive constraint. If it's an art, I mean, art is improved by constraint. But the other aspect of that is that in a live performance, that time fluctuates. So you might have prepared a wonderful description of something. And then it doesn't happen, because everyone's doing everything a bit quicker, and you run out of time. So it's a massive influence on description. And not always a good one. But yeah, in terms of slowing, peoples’ looking, it's very different, isn't it? But going back to the little point I made about piecing information together in a different time, in an asynchronous way, I think what's interesting about an introduction, for example, to a play or to a film is that you find out in advance a lot of information. And sometimes that's really helpful, because it gives you context. So then you can piece together more easily the different parts of the puzzle. And other times, you might go back to it and find out more information afterwards. And so that after the event, your description has more resonance, because you kind of get where it was going, even though we tried to set it up beforehand. And I've been doing some interesting work with, with the person who made the films for Hannah and Rachel's IDEA Project, about including information about the appearance of participants within the film, rather than before the film, so that a speaker wouldn't have just a little caption under their name, they would pause the film for that moment, and you'd have a little self-introduction from the person so that you get a much richer understanding whether you're blind or not blind, of what that person looks like, what they sound like, what they're wearing, their appearance, and their job title, normally. And I just think it makes for a much, it kind of changes the time of the original artwork. But it benefits everybody, I think. Right? So having said that, Rachel, I’ll hand over to you.

**Vanessa Warne** 1:07:23

Thank you, Louise. Go ahead, Rachel.

**Rachel Hutchinson**

Yes, I was just thinking, and this isn't something that that is part of my research. It's not something that I've done research on. But I think there's something about the way that we, the way that we consume information in an internet age and the way that that we that, we move very quickly, you know, from one piece of information to the next without necessarily lingering over it or kind of having any sort of deep engagement with it. I know that that's, that's personally true for me, you know, just thinking back over my lifetime, the way that I would have consumed the news, for example. I’d have sat down and watched the news for 30 minutes in an evening. And now I'm more likely to flick through headlines on my phone, not necessarily taking things in, in the way that I, that I should be. And I think what the research shows in art galleries and museums kind of suggests, this kind of consuming kind of behavior in a way that can happen when people can sort of go in and visually sample work and spend relatively little time actually engaging with any one thing. And there's an argument for that, you know, that, that's a choice. And that's, that's absolutely fine. And that's actually a choice that I think, you know, people are interested in trying to promote, in AD as well and rightly so. But it does kind of beg the question of what, what level of engagement somebody is going to have, with that kind of consuming visual engagement, visual behavior. And I think there's something wonderful about audio description, just encouraging, encouraging people to slow down and to just let themselves be transported to another place and another time potentially. And to just, to sort of have that imaginative engagement with, with something; you know, whether they're whether they're seeing it or not, or however they're engaging, it's just about taking a moment to step outside their lives in a way and, and I think that, I think that's one of the things that, that is hugely appealing about audio description for lots and lots of different people. So I think you're right, I think that time is really, really important and time is kind of, in some ways, is the sort of the challenge or the enemy of, of the describer in so many ways, like, like Louise said, and then in museums, so you theoretically can talk for as long as you would like to it's still, it's still an issue but she got it keep people's attention, got to keep, keep them engaged. But there is at least that opportunity to take the time.

**David Johnson** 1:10:07

Can I add something?

**Vanessa Warne** 1:10:09

Of course, David, please go ahead. And thank you, Rachel.

**David Johnson** 1:10:13

Sorry, Rachel, to interrupt, I hope. I go to lots and lots of audio descriptions in art galleries of art, static art, where time isn't such a constraint, only the sort of the length, the length of the event itself, but it's not like a moving... usually it's a static piece they’re describing, but the best audio descriptions, I think, in my view, are the ones that create space, as well as time for reactions from the audience, as it were. So it becomes a discussion, as well as an audio description, because, I don't know about you, but I always have thoughts as I'm having things described to me. And I quite often want to express them, or start a conversation, and that, there are many other blind people as well who feel the same in my experience. So I think it's great if space can be created for the conversational. So that's, I think, sort of resonates with what you were saying, I think, Rachel about slowing the experience, down or at least, dwelling on that moment of joy and interest and engagement with whatever it is that's been described. That's harder. I know, but you can't do that with films, I guess, or plays, or ballets, dance so easily.

**Rachel Hutchinson** 1:11:59

Well, it's Rachel here again. I mean, one thing about the, you know, the audio introduction to a play or to a film or, or dance is that it does expand the, the amount of time that somebody engages, because they, they have, you know, the experience of listening to the audio introduction, they might listen to it before they come, they might listen to it as they are settling into their seats, they might revisit it when they want to think again about the play and make sense of it later on. So it does is still is providing that opportunity for a kind of expanded engagement beyond the actual event itself, which is really nice.

**David Johnson** 1:12:34

Yeah, yeah, I mean, art, the arts is a social thing as much as an aesthetic thing, isn't it? So it also allows for that social side of it to flourish.

**Vanessa Warne** 1:12:47

Thank you all for those thoughts. I'm wondering if I could move from this big question of time to think with you a bit about sound and the audio. But before I do that I will just note that Hannah has sent me a note about a wonderful piece, we had the pleasure of coediting by Arseli Dokumaci about the affordances of video and the ability to simply stop video, insert content, and then begin again. And she embraces in your work the concept of crip time in terms of a celebration of slowing, of pause, of stall, of stop. And so I were thinking, both Hannah and I, through that work now and again, that's available through *Disability Studies Quarterly* online. Could I turn now to Sabine and then after Sabine to David, because you have me thinking about sound and audio, and Sabine, I think we speak too little about the audio description of built space. And you have reminded me, we also think too little about the sonic design or the sound of built space. And so I'm thinking about sound and accessible spaces through your work. And then David, I'm thinking about all of your wonderful handheld tabletop pieces. I think, by the way, David, we need more handheld art in the world. So we turn to you for that. But I'm thinking also about the reference you make to your sound piece. And I wonder about that kind of bypassing of the world of audio description through the use of audio as a medium. So if I could just ask perhaps, Sabine first and then David to reflect on, on the audio, the acoustic on, on soundscape, whether that is in relationship to accessibility to a work of art or to something on a very different scale, like the lived experience of built space. Sabine, I'll let the translator catch us up, and then I'll turn to you when you're ready

**Sabine Gadrat** 1:15:12

I have two viewpoints; so I am an architect by training. So I kind of have a viewpoint about buildings and spaces as they are and the way sound is propagating. For instance, in lobbies, halls, corridors theaters: it can be a nightmare for visually impaired people, because it's just a blurry, awful noise. Big spaces, people are disorientated, it is very complex to find out the right information, and the right place, and the right direction. Now, when talking about the sound, in theaters in France, we are faced with live shows where actors use microphones and loudspeakers associated to that. And lots of visually impaired people like to be in the front seats, so to be able to listen to the steps of the actors on stage, for instance. And when actors use microphones and loudspeakers, we lose that sense. But recently, I took part in a show, a live show, and lots of details, such as lighting a cigarette, for instance, could be heard by the audience, but they were not meant to be heard by the audience. And that made me think really about these techniques which are being used nowadays, in French theatres, and which may not be so positive aspects, really, because actors must perform lively, must promote their voices, work on their voices. And I really wondered about these technical aspects. I don't know whether that relates very well, to your questions. But that's what I wanted to say anyhow with that regard.

**Vanessa Warne** 1:17:21

That is wonderful, and a very enriching point of view. Thank you, Sabine. David, can we turn to you now to talk about sound, perhaps as a medium and experiences of it?

**David Johnson** 1:17:35

Certainly, yes. Well, it's such a huge, such a huge subject. First of all, I mean, Sabine, on the audio, have you heard of the work by Chris Downey, the blind architect from America? He talks eloquently about sound? Yes. But for me, yeah, well, I mean, the first, first thing to say is audio description is a sound-based phenomena. And for me, personally, it's a very kind of personal thing that when I first started attending audio descriptions 20 or 25 years ago, it was the sound of the audio describer’s voice and the words that they chose to describe art, for me, it was, it was, again, paintings and sculptures at the time, that was the most thrilling realization that's through those, those sonic tones and the words chosen by the audience descriptor, the, the, the joy, or the richness of art, came sort of back to me, as a totally blind person. And the visuality of, of the art came back to me, whether that whether the audio describer was stirring up memories of past visual experiences I've had as, as a non-blind person, or whether it was more than that, I like to think it's more than that now. I'm aware of a kind of innate visuality that we all have. But there were, there were certainly memories as well that would come into play. So sound is vital to my, to my art practice. But I think also I’m caused to remember what Georgina was saying earlier about the distinction between information and aesthetics. I think sound is obviously all around us all the time if we have good hearing and even if we, even if our hearing is impaired, sound is available to us through our body, through the tissue of our body, I'm increasingly aware of that as well, that I hear, I think I hear as much through my body, as I do through my ears. Sound is around us all the time. And we gain, we can choose to sort of immerse, immerse ourselves in it as information, as a source of just pure information, which is very important, of course, particularly for the blind, it helps you locate and keeps, keeps you safe, and gives you an understanding and knowledge of what's around you, which is obviously vital. But also the aesthetic side of sound and acoustics is very- an increasingly important part of my practice, and a very important part of my understanding of, this wider understanding of aesthetics, that every time you look at something, if you are a non-blind person, you're also hearing something, you're also smelling, you're also touching, and tasting all at the same time: all the senses, including sound are all fizzing away all the time. So I try and embrace-- and I think John Cage had a lot to say about that back in the sort of 50s and 60s about just addressing that sort of continual presence of sound that may not be built into the composer's work or the artist’s work when they were creating their piece, but it's always going to be there. So to build that in, somehow into your art, I think is a fascinating process, process and a thing to think about.

**Vanessa Warne** 1:21:51

Thank you very much, David. And thank you again to Sabine. I will just note in the Google Doc that Aravinda Bhat has shared that he finds the work the speakers are sharing about audio description very absorbing, and that the text he has submitted to the conference deals with audio descriptions, so people may find that of interest. What I would like to do now is just signal to our chair Hannah that I'm going to turn to her in a moment both to promote the upcoming final event of this day, an engaging and very relevant workshop, and also I will ask Hannah to finish some unfinished business so that we can hear from Zina who had a microphone issue earlier. But before I do any of that I would like to take this moment to thank our student assistants, our wonderful interpreters for the extraordinary work they have been doing for us today and the support they have offered us in our learning. And, of course, to thank our four wonderful speakers for this session: Louise, Rachel, Sabine and David, for their generosity and for the richness of what they have shared with us. So thank you all very, very much. We look forward to continuing this journey with you. And Hannah, I will turn to you now.

**Hannah Thompson** 1:23:08

Thank you so much, Vanessa; what a wonderful question and answer session. So at half past, so in 35 minutes, we're running a workshop, where we're going to listen together to some audio description, creative audio description that has been co-written by a mixed group of blind, partially blind and non- blind people. The descriptions are in English and French and we will divide people up into different rooms for the listening experience. And then we'll come back together for the discussion, and it is Sabine, who's going to be facilitating the workshop and we will be joined by some of our friends from the Collective who wrote the descriptions. I will speak to you a bit in French to read a message from Zina who has technical issues. It's linked to the last, previous session. We were talking about the project of digitalization of Celine at the VH. And Zina would have liked to mention the fact that she is a militant supporter for the Quinze-Vingts archives should be digitalized and made accessible to blind people and blind researchers from the whole world. She also wanted to say a word about the birth of identity awareness amongst the blind community in the 19th century in France. That was linked to what was the autobiographical writings and the invention of braille and the appearance of the first and the birth of the first Association’s initiatives. Thank you Zina, for what you contributed. We now have a half hour break. So I invite you all to stretch your legs, exercise your brain and your stomach. And I'll see you, we'll see you back here at half past. Thank you very much.