



## The “How-To” of Accessible Art Exhibitions

### HANGING ARTWORK:

- Consider comfortable viewing zones when hanging artwork to ensure inclusive exhibition access
- Comfortable Viewing Zones
  - Average eye height for individuals who are seated including those using mobility devices is 48”
  - Average eye height for individuals who are standing is 61”
  - Individuals both seated and standing can comfortably view large print from 19” away when it is between 48” and 67” above floor
- Consider height of tactile artworks to ensure that all patrons have access to explore through touch the various aspects of the art

### LABELS:

- Consider placement, type size, fonts, contrast, and the addition of braille
- Print should be a minimum of 24 points or larger depending upon the distance from which people must read the print
- Center signs and labels at approximately 54” above the floor
- 70% minimum contrast (black on white is 100%) between print and paper
- Avoid “bright whites” to reduce glare
- Resources on print legibility and color contrast: [www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/legible/](http://www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/legible/)  
[www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/effective-color-contrast/](http://www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/effective-color-contrast/)

### LIGHTING AND CONTRAST:

- Position light so shadows are not created on artwork, labels, display cases, objects, and pathways
- Provide good color contrast throughout exhibit environment

### CIRCULATION ROUTE IN EXHIBIT:

- Tour route should meet all the requirements of an accessible route or pathway – consider aisle width to allow for individuals who use wheelchairs and other barriers that would impede easy access to exhibit
- Include seating with armrests for patrons that tire easily
- Design a flexible, organized route with good directional signage
- Tour route must be well lit, easy to follow for inclusive programming, and free from objects that protrude into path of travel, things that hang low overhead, and items that might trip people

### EXHIBITION CONTENT:

- Accessible at multiple intellectual levels
- Presented through multiple sensory channels

## DISPLAY CASES:

- The top of free standing display cases with pedestal bases or legs should be 33” – 40” above the floor
- Display cases with legs should have a cane-detectable barrier no higher than 27” above the floor
- The top of display cases which require patrons to look into the case to see objects should be no more than 36” above the floor

## EQUIPMENT, CONTROLS, AND INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS:

- Controls and switches should not require pinching, grasping, or fine motor control to operate
- Instructions for interactive exhibits must be accessible in both format and location
- Controls should be easy to reach and find
- Operable parts of interactive exhibits should be placed within 15” and 48” from the floor
- Controls and exhibits that give feedback should be both audible and visual

## EXHIBITION MATERIALS:

- Consider print legibility and color contrast for all marketing information, brochures and exhibit documentation
- Provide Alternate Formats:
  - **Large Print:**  
Use scalable, non-italic, sans serif font such as Ariel or Helvetica in 14 – 18 point
  - **Braille**
  - **Auditory**  
Tapes, Cell phones, Listening Stations with speakers, Audio description, Headsets or earphones for playback information
  - **Captioning**
  - **CART (Computer Assisted Real Time Captioning)**
  - **Scripts of Audio Information**
  - **Electronic**  
Computers, Web sites, E-mail
  - **Tactile Materials**  
Raised line drawings and maps, tactile representations of artworks, touch tours  
Consider durability of tactile materials

## EXHIBITIONS FOR CHILDREN:

- Refer to Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibit Design, Section XI., Children’s Environments at: [www.si.edu/opa/accessibility/exdesign/sectionb.htm](http://www.si.edu/opa/accessibility/exdesign/sectionb.htm)

## DISABILITY ACCESS SYMBOLS



- Utilize the twelve disability access symbols to promote or publicize exhibition accessibility features
- Download free access symbols from: [www.gag.org/resources/das.php](http://www.gag.org/resources/das.php)

Selected information excerpted from: “Design for Accessibility – A Cultural Administrator’s Handbook” which can be downloaded for free at: [www.nea.gov/resources/Accessibility/DesignAccessibility.html](http://www.nea.gov/resources/Accessibility/DesignAccessibility.html)  
This document includes basic suggestions for accessible exhibit features but is not meant to be a complete list. The “How To” of Accessible Art Exhibitions can be provided in alternate formats.  
Contact VSA arts of Florida at 813-558-5095 for questions regarding information contained in this document.