



Study Days: “Universal Accessibility in Museums”

December 9 and 10, 2025 – Auditorium of the Rennes Museum of Fine Arts

Programme

Day 1 – Tuesday, December 9, 2025 – A look back to FRAME Tactile Gallery, *Please do Touch!*

9:30am – Welcome Address

Sélène Tonon, Town Councilor, Delegate to Museums, Public Reading, and Recreational Culture, City of Rennes

Christelle Creff, Head of the Musées de France, General Direction of Heritage and Architecture, Ministry of Culture, and Co-President of FRAME in France

Delphine Galloy, Director and Curator, Musées des Beaux-Arts de Arts, Rennes.

10:10am – Opening video

Please Do Touch! Eight Years to make Museums More Accessible

10:20am – Dialogue – The Project’s Origins

Laure Olivès, visually impaired consultant

Céline Peyre, former Head of the Educational Department, Musée Fabre de Montpellier, now in charge of Visual Arts and Artistic Creation in Public Spaces, Montpellier City

This presentation will take the form of a dialogue between Laure Olivès and Céline Peyre. They will discuss the origins of the project, how it evolved, Laure Olivès' involvement at every stage, from design to implementation, and her role as an educator to bring the project to life and ensure its consistency and success. The exchange will be interactive and will provide a better understanding of the origins and challenges of this approach.

Approached in 2016 by Céline Peyre and Jean-Noël Roques, accessibility project manager, to join the team at the Musée Fabre in Montpellier, Laure Olivès' primary mission was to develop audio guides adapted to this innovative project: a tactile gallery of sculptures that can be touched. “Then, thanks to my uniqueness, my difference, I was involved in other tasks such as validating sculpture

masters, raising awareness among teams, helping to develop the museography, not to mention the two-voice guided tours. Thanks to FRAME, I was able to participate in the touring of the tactile gallery,” Laure Olivès.

11am – Testimony – What Sculptures are there to touch?

François Blanchetière, Chief Curator, Sculpture and Architecture, Musée d’Orsay, Paris

Sculpture is an art of volume, usually appreciated solely through sight, thanks to the play of light and shadow on the surface of the work. When it can also be touched, as offered by the tactile gallery, our perception is enriched by a sensory, even sensual approach. However, it turns out that touch alone does not always make it easy to grasp the form, especially when the composition is complex and the details very subtle. The experience of the tactile gallery has led its designers to become aware of certain limitations and to make choices aimed at making the works more accessible through simple touch.

11:30am - Panel Discussion – From *Art and Matter* to *Please Do Touch!*: Evolution of an Inclusive Device accross France

Moderator: **Emilie Vanhaesebroucke**, Executive Director of FRAME in France

Stéphanie Bardel, Head of Visitors Department, Musées des Beaux-Arts de Rennes

Isabelle Beccia, Educator and Corporate Liaison Manager, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux

Marion Boutellier, Head of the Educational Department, Musée Fabre de Montpellier

Bastien Colas, Head of the Cultural Department, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon

Laetitia Ducamp, Education and audience development officer, Musée d’arts de Nantes

Florence Raymond, Curator, Head of Curatorial and Educational Programs, Musée de l'Hospice Comtesse de Lille

Sibille Wsevoljsky, Educator and Project Manager, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen

Created as an initiative of the Musée Fabre in Montpellier in partnership with the Louvre Museum, the tactile gallery *L'Art et la Matière* is a multifaceted exhibition that has taken several forms. The first version was presented from 2016 to 2018 in Montpellier, Rodez, and then Vizille, before evolving into a second version entitled *Prière de toucher! (Please do Touch!)* as part of the FRAME network from 2019 to 2025. Each stage contributed to enriching the initial project thanks to the shared curatorship between the fine arts museums of Lyon, Rouen, Lille, Bordeaux, Nantes, and Rennes. Representatives from these FRAME museums will take turns discussing how the exhibition was renewed throughout its journey thanks to the strength of the collective, while adapting to the realities of each location in a spirit of complementarity.

2:15pm – Keynote – Synoptic Overview of the Touring Exhibition *Art and Matter. Please Do Touch!*

Hadrien Riffaut, PhD in sociology, Associate researcher at Cerlis, CNRS – University of Paris

This speech offers a summary of the material gathered during the traveling exhibition *Prière de toucher (Please do Touch!)*. Based on quantitative and qualitative surveys conducted with partner museums and their teams, as well as a series of interviews conducted between September and October with professionals who hosted the exhibition (mediation, visitor services, conservation, etc.), it aims to identify the main lessons learned from this experience, analyze the value produced for audiences and institutions, and, more broadly, examine contemporary developments in the social and inclusive role of today's museums.

3:30pm – Panel Discussion – Seeing differently at the museum: Accompanying and experimenting *Please Do Touch!*

Moderator : **Juliette Barthélémy**, Director of Education at Musée du Louvre-Lens

Bertrand Loïc Catherine, Photographer

Pierre Ciolfi, President of the Paris Committee - Ile-de-France Region, Association Valentin Haüy, AVH

Mokrane Ouyed, Member of the Association Les Auxiliaires des Aveugles 76, Rouen

The discussion brings together three speakers involved in cultural accessibility: Mr. Ouyed, who is active in the Rouen community and participated in the Rouen stage of *Prière de Toucher*; Mr. Ciolfi, head of the Paris Île-de-France Committee of the VH association and initiator of the Tactile Tour; and Mr. Catherine, author and photographer who discovered museum accessibility through his visits. Each speaker will discuss their personal experiences: the tactile discovery of works at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, the multisensory approach to Leonardo da Vinci's works in parallel with the Louvre exhibition, and the sensitive and scientific mediation of a museum in the Dordogne area. Together, they highlight the essential conditions for enabling access to art: physical accessibility, visitor autonomy, co-construction of devices with the audiences concerned, and selection of a limited number of works for in-depth mediation. They emphasize the need to combine touch, audio description, sensory narration, and human mediation in order to fully perceive an artwork. Finally, they point out that the tactile approach, whether to painting or sculpture, can enrich and sometimes condition the understanding of an artwork, even if other modes of perception can also open the way to the artistic experience.

5pm – Counterpoint - Georgina Kleege: The art of touch: lending a hand to the sighted majority.

Ronna Tulgan Ostheimer, Director of Learning and Engagement, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown

5:30pm – Accessibility and cultural professions

Marine Roy, Disability and Inclusion Officer, at the Direction générale de la démocratie culturelle, des enseignements et de la recherche, Ministry of Culture.

Access to employment in the cultural sector for people with disabilities is a priority in the Ministry of Culture's roadmap. An update will be provided on the latest progress made by the ministry on this issue and the measures announced by the Minister of Culture in 2025.

Day 2 – Wednesday, December 10, 2025 – Universal Accessibility in Museums in France and North America

9am – Introduction – Universal accessibility. What are we talking about?

Bertrand Verine, President of AFONT, Honorary Associate Professor, Language Sciences, Université Paul Valéry-Montpellier 3

While pointing out that universal accessibility, given the diversity of audiences, concerns physical access to places, intellectual access to information and knowledge, and sensory access to aesthetic experiences, Bertrand Verine will focus on the aesthetic field since, for the majority of the public, the purpose of a museum is to enable visitors to experience works of art or other phenomena through their senses. After briefly demonstrating that “accessibility for all” is an unattainable ideal, he will develop several avenues for reflection in favor of a form of universality that is accessible in an attainable way.

9:30am – Keynote – Universal Accessibility and Cultural Rights

Isabelle Anatole-Gabriel, Associate Researcher, UMR 9022 Heritage.s, CY Cergy Paris Université

The term “universal access to museums” reflects the consideration and adaptation of museum facilities to the diversity of histories and unique affiliations of the citizens who make up a nation. The aim is to enable everyone to access museums. The term also refers to a set of philosophical and political ideas on which the contemporary international order is based and which, for more than 70 years, has given museums a major role in “living together.” Thus, granting access to museums through the exercise of cultural rights can only be understood within the framework of fundamental human rights and the conventions that give them reality and effectiveness. Organized in three parts, the conference will first explain the construction of cultural rights as human rights and their application in the field of museums and heritage, particularly in the North American and French contexts. Based on the concepts of difference and inequality, the second part will analyze the challenges posed to the implementation of these rights over the last 30 years, as well as the major advances made by museums. Finally, it will examine the conditions for continuing the responses put forward by museums in a global context of democratic decline and the erosion of fundamental rights, which is giving rise to new forms of exclusion.

11am – Panel Discussion – Overview and Situational Analysis of Universal Accessibility in Museums in Canada, the United States and France

Moderator: **Delphine Harmel**, In charge of Accessibility, Centre des Monuments nationaux

Marie Clapot, Cultural Accessibility & Disability Inclusion Consultant, Programs & Operations Leader, New York

Cindy Lebat, PhD., Information and Communication Sciences, Associate Researcher at Cerlis, CNRS – University of Paris

Aude Porcedda, Professor in Management and Cultural Organizations, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

Marie Clapot will first introduce the theoretical frameworks of accessibility in the United States, particularly the legal framework governing accessibility, and describe their influence on museum accessibility policies. She will discuss the need for museums to engage in a paradigm shift in accessibility. This paradigm goes beyond accessibility policies focused on standards and services and takes into account representations, narratives, and perspectives of disability in museum practices.

Cindy Lebat will provide an up-to-date overview of the situation in France. Her presentation will draw on qualitative and quantitative data from several studies conducted in recent years, enabling an assessment of practices, progress, and persistent gaps in terms of inclusion. She will highlight the strengths of the French museum sector, innovative initiatives, and inspiring examples of accessible facilities. She will also present the main obstacles encountered in the field—whether organizational, technical, or cultural—in order to offer a nuanced and constructive interpretation of accessibility in museums in France today.

Based on the results of a survey conducted among 79 Quebec museums, Aude Porcedda will provide a detailed overview of universal accessibility practices in Quebec museum institutions. The goal of the research was to identify the barriers and facilitators encountered by people with disabilities in accessing museums. Institutional positioning, professional practices, space layout, and access to cultural content were examined. The results highlight significant disparities depending on the size of the museums, their resources, and their priorities. They have led to several recommendations that she will submit to the audience in order to see how to move toward more systemic and structural inclusion within museums.

12pm – Focus #1 – Case Study: *Les Objets à vivre* [Objects to Experience]

Pauline Lacaze, Head of Education and Public Engagement, CAPC, Musée d'Art contemporain, Bordeaux

Inaugurated on March 27, *Les Objets à vivre* (Objects to Experience) is a mediation program designed to make the museum more accessible to everyone. Conceived by artist Virginie Barré, in collaboration with people with disabilities, students from the École de Condé, and museum staff, this project encourages experimentation and a sensory approach while taking into account the diversity of museum visitors. Installed in the reception areas of the CAPC, this initiative offers the public a series of objects and tools to accompany their discovery of the works. Launched in 2022, this approach is part of a broader reflection on free and universal accessibility.

2:30pm – Panel Discussion – Visitors' « Autonomy »: Museums Global Strategies and their limits.

Moderator : **Sophie Onimus-Carrias**, Senior Curator, Deputy Director for Cultural Affairs, Head of the Department of Architecture and Heritage, Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs in AuvergneRhône-Alpes

Géraldine Delaforge Head of Accessibility, Universcience

Mélanie Deveau, Learning and Community Engagement Director, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Delphine Galloy, Director and Curator, Musées des Beaux-Arts de Arts, Rennes

Danielle Schulz, Associate Director of Lifelong Learning and Accessibility, Denver Art Museum

The panel discussion will examine the concept of autonomy, both for professionals and users. Through sharing their experiences, the speakers will attempt to shed light on the concept and the progress made in implementing it in museums.

For more than 25 years, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has documented the benefits of art mediation and art therapy on the physical, psychological, and social well-being of diverse populations in order to ensure the museum's accessibility to them. In order to perpetuate the knowledge and strategies developed for audiences with special needs, the MMFA has included in its 2023-2026 strategic plan an objective to integrate research data into its activities. For example, in collaboration with museums in the FRAME network, knowledge about neurodiversity has been consolidated in a *Guide for Welcoming Autistic Visitors*, and then in the creation of a mediation tool for a wider family audience. Similarly, co-creation practices developed over time have been leveraged to develop an audio-guided and tactile device for visually impaired visitors to the *ummaqutik - Essence of Life* exhibition. At the MMFA, visitor autonomy is considered in an intersectional manner from the perspective of accessibility, whether physical, socioeconomic, or communicational, as Mélanie Deveault will discuss.

Danielle Schulz will explore how inclusive museums contribute to community sustainability. She will draw on international perspectives to discuss how inclusive museums use universal design principles to include all audiences in the development of their exhibitions and programs, thereby contributing to sustainable representation and community sustainability.

[3:30pm – Focus #2 – Case Study: The App « MBA Autisme »](#)

Bastien Colas, Head of the Cultural Department, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon

The MBA Autism app is offered by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon to help visitors with autism feel comfortable during their visit to the museum. It was created in collaboration with the Dallas Museum of Art as part of the FRAME network. The development of this app is part of a major initiative led by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon with people affected by autism spectrum disorders. A new tool for empowerment and inclusion, MBA Autism increases opportunities for visits.

[4:30pm – Panel Discussion – What challenges will museums face in the next ten years in terms of universal accessibility?](#)

Moderator: **Anne Chotin**, Service of Devices for Visual Impaired People, iNSEi

Aurélia Fleury, Specialist in Cultural Accessibility, Quebec

Raffaella Russo-Ricci, Head of Education, Paris Musées, National Correspondant for France at ICOM-CECA

Pr Hannah Thompson, Director of Humanities and Arts Research Institute (HARI), Royal Holloway University, London

Ronna Tulgan Ostheimer, Director of Learning and Engagement, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown

Aurélia Fleury will share experiences from Quebec that illustrate how accessibility can become a shared culture within museum institutions. She will propose “de-capacitating museums,” that is, moving away from ableist representations to embrace the diversity of bodies, minds, and rhythms at the heart of the cultural experience.

Raffaella Russo-Ricci will present the poster “A museum for everyone!”, designed in 2021 by the ICOM CECA Special Interest Group. “Universal accessibility, the inclusive museum” is the starting point for addressing the implementation of measures that promote an autonomous museum experience for all audiences in the museums of the City of Paris. It also addresses the issue of exercising the right to training for all people with disabilities within a museum team, thanks to a project to adapt the poster into a tool suitable for people with intellectual developmental disorders. This approach is fully in line with a sustainable concept of the museum for both the public and professionals.

During the round table discussion, Hannah Thompson will talk about her research project, *The Sensational Museum*, which demonstrates that no single sense should be necessary or sufficient to enjoy the museum experience. The project drew on her knowledge of disability to transform the way museums operate for the benefit of all. She will discuss some strategies for ensuring long-term inclusivity in museums and helping museums avoid the trap of marginalizing access. She will share tools and resources that have been created to help museums put inclusivity at the heart of their offering for all visitors.

[6pm – Conclusion](#)

Anne Krebs, Honorary Researcher at the Louvre

What value creation for museums and their territories?

Supporting the discussions during the study days, the presentation will aim to highlight the major contributions of the processes implemented and the experiments conducted. As factors of innovation, these echo original and successful approaches tested at the European level.