

Museum

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Museums and disabled persons

museum

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Museums and disabled persons

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OPINION

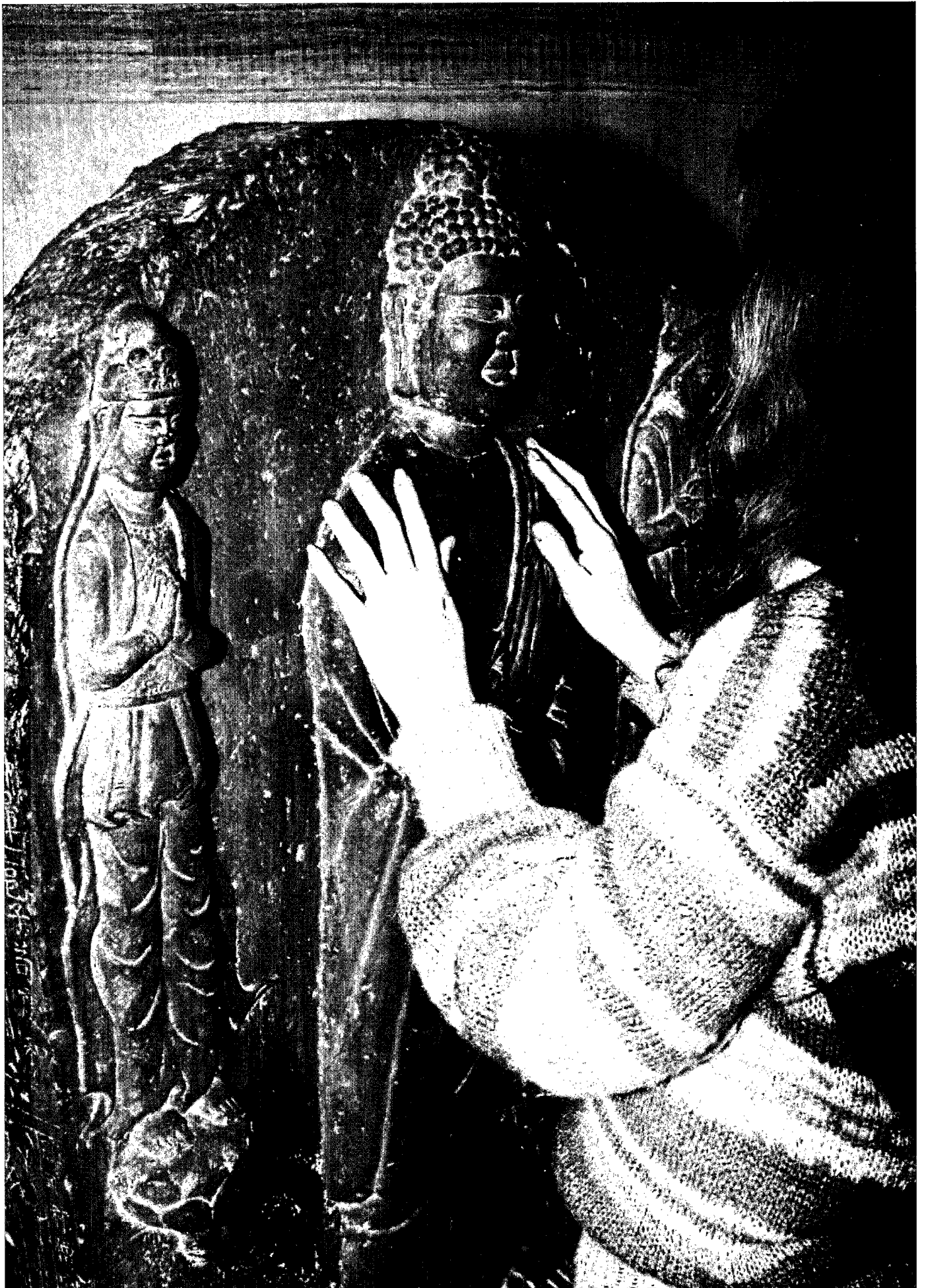
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MUSEÉES ROYAUX D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE, Brussels. At the Museum for the Blind, a young visitor touches the Buddha Sakyamuni on a Chinese votive stela (sixth century) at the *Image of the Buddha* exhibition organized in 1980. Based on the museum's experience of several years (see article by S. Delevoy-Orlet, 'A Museum for the Blind: the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels' in *Museum*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, 1976), this exhibition sought to explain both the lives of the Buddha and the evolution of Buddhist art. Original statues and terracotta reliefs and clay reliefs of figures, animals and plants made by the museum staff after photographs of early Buddhist art in India were accompanied by explanatory panels in Braille and bold type. Further details of the exhibition and of creative visits and tours organized for children and adults will be provided in a future issue.

[Photo: Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels.]

Editorial

Racism takes differences in the colour of individuals' skins or in the cultural patterns of various groups and makes of them the outward and visible signs of a total otherness and the distinguishing marks of inherent inferiority or superiority. Can modern societies summon up the necessary courage and show the necessary clear-sightedness to break away from a pattern of behaviour towards the handicapped which at times proceeds from a similar extrapolation?

Handicaps, whether of body or mind, sometimes result from accidents, but they are often the consequence of the faults or failings—war, hunger, disease—of the societies in which we live. The victims emerge bearing the stamp of a profound difference from their fellows, a difference which too many people believe to be irremediable. Thus it is that, in both the industrialized and the developing countries, the handicapped—nearly a tenth of humanity—may find themselves under sentence of exclusion from society.

Our laws and, more generally, the whole organization of our everyday life in its simplest acts seem to overlook the very existence of the handicapped. The fact that they are in many cases shut up in special institutions, kept dependent on assistance and cut off from the rest of the community perpetuates society's ignorance of their real needs and deepest aspirations. Yet they ask for nothing more than the means of joining in the various aspects of social life and, as a corollary, for society fully to accept their participation.

Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow,
Director-General of Unesco¹

The message of the International Year for Disabled Persons will reinforce the commitment of many museum workers throughout the world for whom these ideas have long been part of their professional credo. For others, this year has no doubt triggered off new and imaginative efforts to open the doors of their museums still wider.

Welcoming disabled persons as full-fledged visitors must be accepted as a genuine moral duty. To fulfil that duty means the exercise of several responsibilities: a search for fuller understanding of disabilities, and of their causes and corollaries; the adaptation of the museum environment, particularly of its means of communication; the elimination of its physical barriers; the harnessing of all the resources of common sense, ingenuity, patience, enthusiasm and friendship.

The first section that follows discusses some of these responsibilities. It opens with a brief overview of the handicap process seen by a specialist in social medicine, who pinpoints the challenges to be overcome. The converging points of view that follow show some of the ways in which museums can take up those challenges.

1. From the Preface to a special issue of the *Unesco Courier*: 'The Handicapped Tenth of Humanity' (January 1981).

But is the definition of a special category the most helpful approach to handicaps that are in part determined by cultural values and social attitudes? The 'Opinion' page brings to bear on this question the special irony of a physically handicapped museum curator. He has a negative answer.

Reports from across the world reveal that a clear commitment and an awareness exist in museums everywhere. This section is not intended to be exhaustive; nor has it been possible to present a comparative international assessment of museum practice. The reports in this issue reflect work carried out before or at the very beginning of this International Year.² They include, for example, only one glimpse of programmes in North America and do scant justice to the enlightened social policy of the Scandinavian countries which finds expression in the museum.

The promoters of the present International Year seek to lay the groundwork for permanent improvement of the opportunities that are offered to the handicapped tenth of humanity. *Museum*, too, hopes to serve this purpose in its own particular sphere, by sharing with its readers various views and accounts of what museums can and should do for a sizeable minority of actual (or potential) visitors. We intend to publish in a future issue, therefore, as part of the continuing international effort, and with the benefit of hindsight, reports on some of the outstanding successes and significant lessons of 1981.

2. *Museum* would like to record its gratitude to Mrs Guri Dybsand, assistant curator at the Kulturhistorisk Museum at Randers, Denmark, and co-ordinator of a Working Party on Special Groups of ICOM's International Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA). The articles by Johannes Sivesind, Hans-Albert Treff, Jaime A. Viñas Roman, S. M. Nair, Astrid Wexell and Sophia Płominska were all initially commissioned by Mrs Dybsand.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Impairments, disabilities, handicaps: predicaments that can be overcome

Assen Jablensky

When it is estimated that at least 400 million people in the world today are disabled,¹ it is useful to consider what is hidden behind the figures. Disability is a condition with which everybody is to some extent familiar, yet it is difficult to define because it is as complex as life itself.

Disability became a concern of the European medical and social agencies relatively recently in history (mainly after the Napoleonic wars), although the predicament of the disabled was part of the social matrix of human communities from the earliest times. People who were 'different' in appearance and behaviour as a result of disease, inborn defect or injury have been the object of varying attitudes ranging from ostracism and fear through indifference or neglect to religious charity, and only of late, with the advent of urbanized societies, have they become increasingly regarded as a 'minority group', whose status needs a legal and technical definition. On the subjective side, being disabled means perhaps as many different things as there are human personalities and ways of experiencing the world—from resigned acceptance of the 'niche' provided by the environment and society to constant rebellion against the handicap, the latter not infrequently leading to remarkable mastery of one's own destiny and extraordinary achievement.

In social medicine, there is still a confusing absence of an agreed conceptual framework to describe the relationship between the customary categories of medical thinking, such as 'disease' and the varied phenomena of disability. Until recently few attempts have been made to draw a dividing line between the two domains, although it is well known that diseases do not always result in disability and that disability may develop quite out of proportion to the severity of the antecedent disease. Moreover, terminology continues to cause communication problems, since terms like 'impairment', 'handicap', 'disability', 'invalidism', 'defect' and possibly quite a few others are used interchangeably in many languages.

Dr Assen Jablensky was born in Bulgaria in 1940 and studied medicine and psychiatry. From 1966 to 1974 he worked consecutively in a psychiatric hospital in Bulgaria, a teaching hospital in the United Kingdom, the Institute of Sociology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Department of Psychiatry of the Medical Academy in Sofia. Since 1974 he has been with the Division of Mental Health of the World Health Organization in Geneva.

1. Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly, *Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation. Reports on Specific Technical Matters*, Geneva, World Health Organization, 1976. (A29/INF.DOC/1.)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons



The General Assembly

Mindful of the pledge made by Member States, under the Charter of the United Nations, to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization to promote higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development,

Reaffirming its faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms and in the principles of peace, of the dignity and worth of the human person and of social justice proclaimed in the Charter,

Recalling the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, as well as the standards already set for social progress in the constitutions, conventions, recommendations and resolutions of the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other organizations concerned,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1921 (LVIII) of 6 May 1975 on the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation of disabled persons,

Emphasizing that the Declaration on Social Progress and Development has proclaimed the necessity of protecting the rights and assuring the welfare and rehabilitation of the physically and mentally disadvantaged,

Bearing in mind the necessity of preventing physical and mental disabilities and of assisting disabled persons to develop their abilities in the most varied fields of activities and of promoting their integration as far as possible in normal life,

Aware that certain countries, at their present stage of development, can devote only limited efforts to this end,

Proclaims this Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons and calls for national and international action to ensure that it will

be used as a common basis and frame of reference for the protection of these rights:

1. The term 'disabled person' means any person unable to ensure by himself or herself, wholly or partly, the necessities of a normal individual and/or social life, as a result of a deficiency, either congenital or not, in his or her physical or mental capabilities.

2. Disabled persons shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. These rights shall be granted to all disabled persons without any exception whatsoever and without distinction or discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin; state of wealth, birth or any other situation applying either to the disabled person himself or herself or to his or her family.

3. Disabled persons have the inherent right to respect for their human dignity. Disabled persons, whatever the origin, nature and seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, have the same fundamental rights as their fellow-citizens of the same age, which implies first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life, as normal and full as possible.

4. Disabled persons have the same civil and political rights as other human beings; paragraph 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons applies to any possible limitation or suppression of those rights for mentally disabled persons.

5. Disabled persons are entitled to the measures designed to enable them to become as self-reliant as possible.

6. Disabled persons have the right to medical, psychological and functional treatment, including prosthetic and orthotic appliances, to medical and social rehabilitation, education, vocational training and rehabilitation, aid, counselling, placement services and other services which will enable them to develop their capabilities and skills to the maximum and will hasten the process of their social integration or reintegration.

7. Disabled persons have the right to economic and social security and to a decent level of living. They have the right, according to their capabilities, to secure and retain employ-

ment or to engage in a useful, productive and remunerative occupation and to join trade unions.

8. Disabled persons are entitled to have their special needs taken into consideration at all stages of economic and social planning.

9. Disabled persons have the right to live with their families or with foster parents and to participate in all social, creative or recreational activities. No disabled person shall be subjected, as far as his or her residence is concerned, to differential treatment other than that required by his or her condition or by the improvement which he or she may derive therefrom. If the stay of a disabled person in a specialized establishment is indispensable, the environment and living conditions therein shall be as close as possible to those of the normal life of a person of his or her age.

10. Disabled persons shall be protected against all exploitation, all regulations and all treatment of a discriminatory, abusive or degrading nature.

11. Disabled persons shall be able to avail themselves of qualified legal aid when such aid proves indispensable for the protection of their persons and property. If judicial proceedings are instituted against them, the legal procedure applied shall take their physical and mental condition fully into account.

12. Organizations of disabled persons may be usefully consulted in all matters regarding the rights of disabled persons.

13. Disabled persons, their families and communities shall be fully informed, by all appropriate means of the rights contained in this Declaration.

*Resolution 3447
Thirtieth session, 2433rd plenary meeting
9 December 1975*

Words and classifications

Words and classifications, of course, do not solve problems by themselves. But they are prerequisites for communication, especially when a concerted effort is required in order to do something about a problem. In 1980 the World Health Organization published a manual² designed to help overcome some of the difficulties referred to above, and to stimulate health workers to approach the problems of disabled people in a more structured way.

The main feature of the proposed classification, based on a considerable body of experience and research, is the distinction between three classes or levels of phenomena:

An *impairment* is defined, in the context of health experience, as 'any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function'.

A *disability* is 'any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being'.

A *handicap* is 'a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex and social and cultural factors) for that individual'.

These three levels, together with the antecedent disease or congenital abnormality, can be regarded as forming, by and large, a cause-and-effect chain, but it should be remembered that the determination along that chain is relative and not absolute. Impairment may be present without leading to any significant restriction of performance, or may cause problems only under certain conditions. In some instances (as for example with the genetic anomaly of the 'sickle-cell trait') an impairment may even confer certain advantages, like resistance to some widespread disease. Disability can be associated with any degree of handicap, depending on the particular activity which is affected and the social context: the loss of a finger would have very different consequences for a concert pianist than for a person whose occupational survival and social adjustment do not make ten fingers indispensable.

A dynamic life process

This needs to be emphasized because the understanding of the *relativity and variation* inherent in each of the levels of impairment, disability and handicap helps to develop a view on these phenomena as a *dynamic life process* which can be modified at any stage.

Some particular problems are posed by those impairments and disabilities which involve psychological functions because they appear to strike at the very core of the personality. It is only a fully intact personality that can adequately compensate for the damage inflicted by disease, injury or congenital abnormality. Even impairments and disabilities resulting from structural or functional brain disturbance, such as the various syndromes of mental retardation, lesions to the mature brain, or psychiatric disorders, are only in a minority of cases irreversible or unresponsive to rehabilitation.

No limits to ingenuity...

Persistence of care, acceptance by the family and the community and efforts to evoke and develop residual or latent abilities can achieve much, even in the absence of sophisticated technology, in improving the quality of life of people with all kinds of disability, including mental retardation and the consequences of severe psychiatric illness. As concerns the latter, traditional societies may have at their disposal means of re-socialization which are superior to the types of care prevalent in the industrialized world. A recent WHO study in nine countries³ demonstrated that almost 50 per cent of patients in developing countries who had suffered an attack of schizophrenic illness had attained

2. *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps*, Geneva, World Health Organization, 1980.

3. *Schizophrenia, an International Follow-up Study*, Geneva, World Health Organization; Chichester, John Wiley & Sons, 1979.

social reintegration and were free of sequelae of the illness five years later. The corresponding percentage in the developed countries was significantly lower.

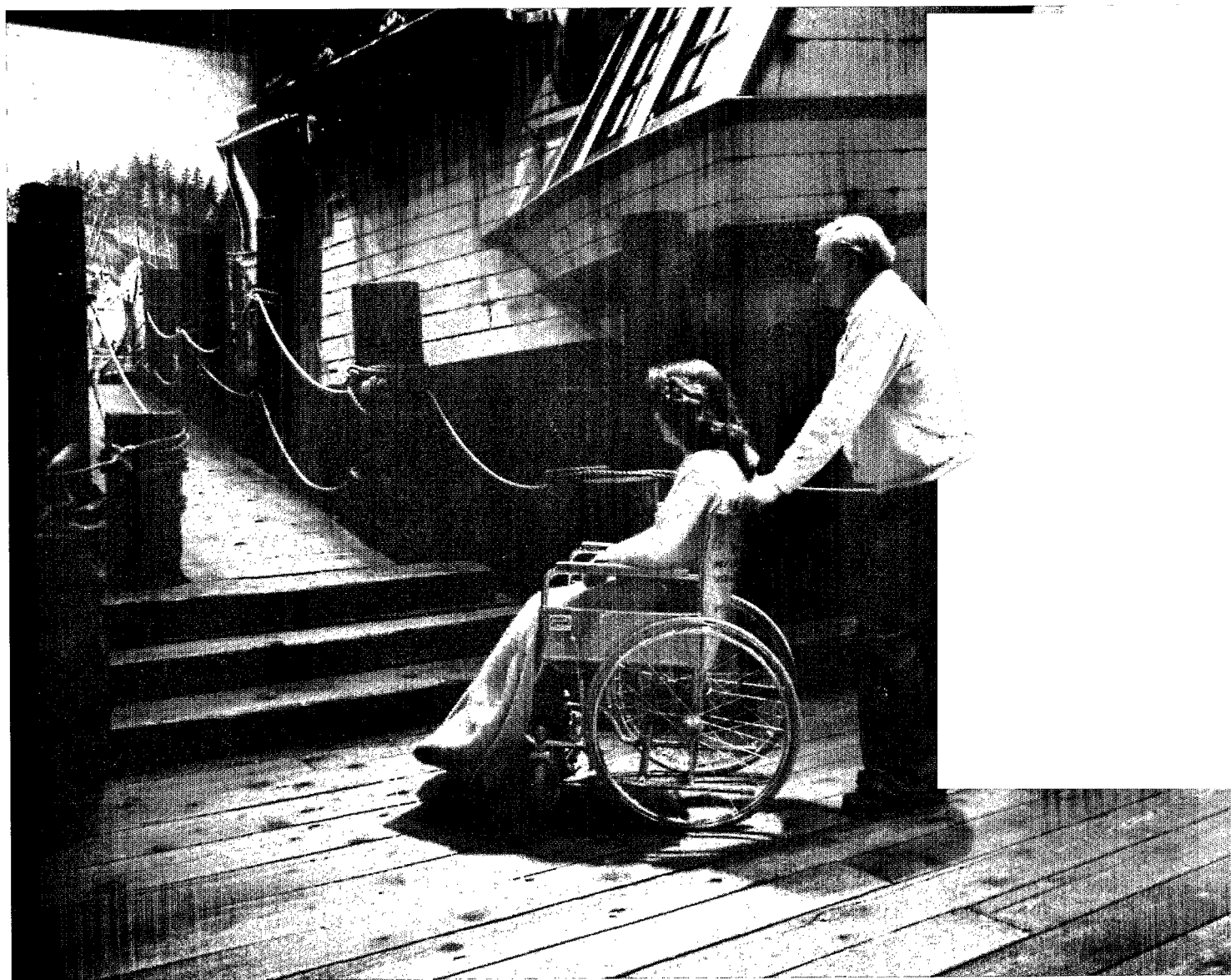
Prevention of disease will, in the long run, prove to be the best strategy in averting impairments, disabilities and handicaps. This goal, however, is still remote because much of present-day medical technology is of the life-saving and life-prolonging type. While such technology has been highly effective in reducing mortality, a paramount objective of an earlier stage of public-health development and thinking, it is not at present matched by adequate means to ensure a life of quality to those who survive a potentially fatal disease. Although the awareness of this costly bias in development is growing, probably a long time is needed before entirely new health-care technologies emerge, and until then the number of the disabled people whose needs are in the 'here and now' will increase.

All cultural resources of societies have a role to play in improving the quality of life of disabled people, and there is no limit to ingenuity and striving. Defining such a role for museums can open the door to a vast and largely unexplored potential, and start a very much needed and timely dialogue between cultural and health workers.

The power to act

Maureen Gee

*I have only one voice to speak,
One voice to call out,
Dropping words into the revolving drum of time,
With the hope that my words will be drawn
By those who have the power to act...*



A continuation of the ramp would have rendered this exhibit accessible.
[Photo: Christopher Tyrrell, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.]

Maureen Gee was born in 1941 in the United Kingdom. B.Ed., University of Victoria, Canada. Seven years' teaching, two years' travel and study in Europe, three years in Zambia with Canadian University Services Overseas. Joined staff of British Columbia Provincial Museum in January 1972 to develop school kits. Extension Officer, co-ordinating temporary exhibits, travelling exhibits, school kits and public programmes, 1973-75. Education Officer in charge of all educational activities since 1975. Member of British Columbia Museum Association, Canadian Museum Association, ICOM. Currently Secretary of Working Party on Special Groups, of ICOM's International Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA). Has published several manuals and guides, numerous articles on programmes, kits, volunteers. Monograph on 'Museum Education in Canada' in *Museums and Children* (edited by U. Kedding-Oloffson), Paris, Unesco, 1979.

N.B. All photos from this museum are re-enactments.

Introduction

Throughout the world, museums have become public institutions. Their cultural and educational role is growing. But, like other public institutions, many museums neglect major groups within their audience—those who for various reasons are less able to compete for their fair share of society's rewards. To be disabled is to be at a disadvantage with respect to a normal social role. This disadvantage is what constitutes handicap, and handicapped people are found in all countries of the world, at all socio-economic levels.

Following the medically defined categories described in the preceding article, for example, colour blindness is considered an impairment that renders persons disabled when they cannot distinguish certain colours. However, it only becomes a handicap in circumstances where the need for colour discrimination is essential. In a museum, somebody with a locomotor impairment who is confined to a wheelchair is disabled, but only becomes handicapped when faced with a museum entrance or interior that has stairs but no ramps or elevators.

Not all disabilities are health related. The Working Party on Special Groups in the International Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA) of ICOM, has concluded that 'everyone may be part of a special group at some time'. The Working Party includes in the category of 'special groups' those who have some disadvantage because of their social, economic or educational level or condition, e.g. ethnic minorities, housewives, unemployed persons, prison inmates, etc.

In all types of disability, a key factor in creating handicap is the attitude of society towards a person who is disabled in some way.¹ For example, the person who has had a nervous breakdown and has recovered may be disabled because of social circumstances. So also the person who has committed a crime, served time in prison and then been released. Both will be handicapped if the attitudes of those around them continue to attach to them a label (an impairment) that is no longer justified.

1. 'Handicap is thus a social phenomenon, representing the social environmental consequences for the individual stemming from the presence of impairments and disabilities.' —*International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps*, Geneva, World Health Organization, 1980.

2. Museums are also guilty of creating handicaps when they take on or are perceived to have 'elitist' roles in society. An institution that is perceived to be only for the educated and/or rich, will be used only by that section of society and will handicap persons of lower economic and educational levels.

An institution and its limitations

No one museum, not any public institution for that matter, can logically hope to resolve all the difficulties in its building or situation that render disabled persons handicapped. What is needed is careful consideration of what the institution can do within its own limitations.²



Access to exhibits is restricted when only stairs and escalators are available. Note lack of information on availability of elevator service.

[Photo: Christopher Tyrrell, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.]

Museums have a responsibility systematically to eliminate existing handicapping conditions and to consider the disabled in plans for future exhibits and buildings. The disabled have been making complaints about poor access to public buildings for nearly half a century. Yet we see relatively new museum buildings where access is limited to the sighted and fully mobile visitor because of poor architectural planning. Even buildings that are designed to provide physical access often have built within them exhibits that give limited or no access to those who are disabled.

It is frequently a compounding of small errors that makes a museum inaccessible to disabled persons. Low light-levels, planned to protect artefacts, are often quite insufficient at floor level for people who have visual impairments; the latter may also have difficulty seeing artefacts that are poorly lit. A man in a wheelchair, well able to move around using the elevators and access ramps, may be faced suddenly with an exhibit that has a set of stairs. People using crutches, or with bad knees, find steep, narrow stairs, designed for authenticity, quite impossible to climb. Tired, these same people sit on the seating provided, only to find it so soft that they sink too low to be able to get up again without assistance. In some institutions elevators are only available with the help of a staff member. Suddenly a normally self-sufficient disabled person finds himself handicapped.

Correction and foresight

What must be kept in mind when planning to accommodate disabled persons in a museum is that these people wish to be able to use it without fuss just as those who have no disabilities. Special facilities or programmes may well be needed on certain occasions but there is much a museum can do in the normal course of things to make the exhibits accessible to disabled members of the public.

The first step in the process is consultation with representatives of all the various groups of the disabled. Changes can then be made in a systematic manner without the danger of doing something that is enabling for one group but disabling for another.

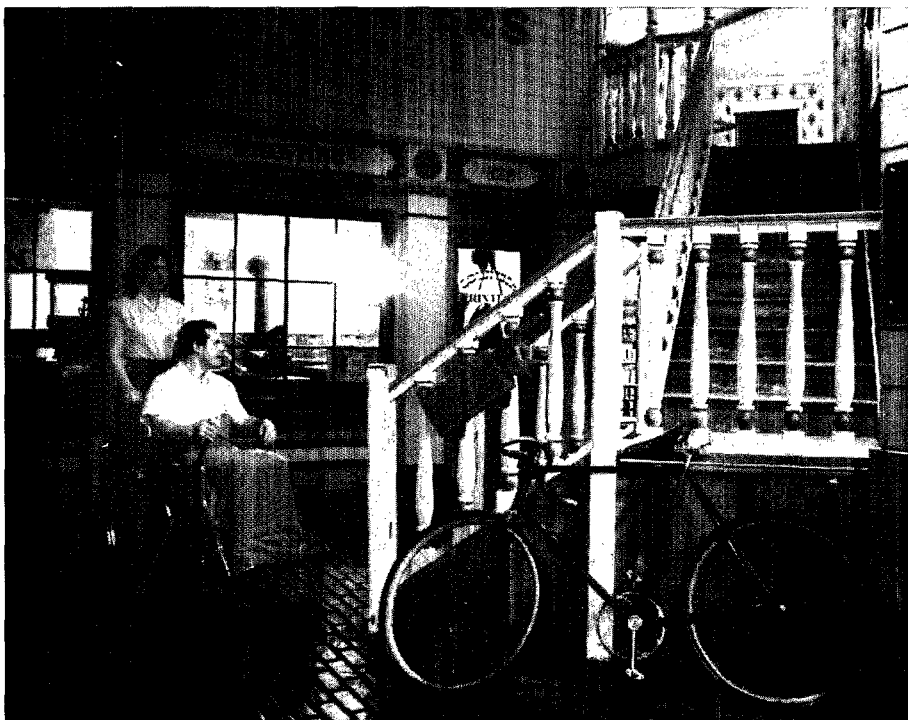
There are a number of solutions that have already been tried or suggested to assist the disabled person to make full use of museums and museum programmes.

Locomotor disabilities. Persons in wheelchairs are the most obviously affected



Elevator service is often only available with staff assistance.

[Photo: Christopher Tyrrell, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.]



Steep stairs to mezzanine exhibits make them inaccessible to people in wheelchairs and those with poor locomotor ability. Note uneven floor surface.

[Photo: Christopher Tyrrell, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.]

but there are also those with sticks, poor knees, limited dexterity or the fragility of senescence. Ramps instead of stairs and the addition of elevators in certain areas can improve access in modern buildings or buildings that do not need to preserve a period architectural authenticity. Historic houses may use ramps for entrance to lower levels, then provide slide/sound shows to those who are unable to visit upper or lower floors.

Less evident, perhaps, is the need to provide seating in the galleries at the correct height. Someone with a locomotor disability who is not in a wheelchair will need seating at a higher level than the seating normally provided. Washrooms must contain at least one latrine and washbowl at the correct height and must have doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. Sight-lines must also be taken into consideration as when catering for a public of both adults and children. Elevators should have controls that can be reached from a wheelchair.

Thought must be given to floor levels and texture. Cobblestones and uneven floors are difficult to steer across in a wheelchair and may cause a bad fall for someone of unsteady gait. Sudden drops in floor levels in darker areas and protruding objects are extra hazards for people with limited mobility. Smooth paths through areas made rough for exhibit effect and a combination of lighting and warning symbols will overcome these problems.

Programming can be adapted by making sure that halls and rooms used have ramp access, space for wheelchairs (with good sight-lines) some higher seating and adequate lighting at floor level at the entrance and exit.

Communication disabilities. These affect people who suffer from impaired hearing, impaired ability to talk or read, or impaired writing skills. The two disabilities that should most concern museums are those of loss of hearing and the inability to read.

It is essential that museums set up communications in such a manner that persons with either of these disabilities can get the information being made available. This involves duplicating aural information in written form (perhaps made available at the reception desk) and written information in audio form, e.g. cassette tapes. Tour guides can be trained to give sign-language tours for those with hearing disabilities, or to use a sign-language interpreter (who often accompanies deaf people) effectively. Lectures or sound-tracks of film/slide shows, etc., can be commented in sign language, the 'signaller' being adequately lit by a spotlight.

Emotional or intellectual disabilities. People suffering from these can usually make use of a museum without any special adaptations being made. However, some emotionally disturbed people may be unsettled by exhibits on frightening subjects or where lighting effects create a dark, claustrophobic impression. Quite often such people come in groups by prior arrangement. An adequate warning of exhibit contents is usually all that is needed.

Programming for people with emotional or intellectual disabilities should be specially designed. Unless museum staff are trained in teaching these groups, staff should work closely with specialists in the field.

Senescence produces a slowing of movement and often reduces hearing and vision. People suffering from senescence may also have slower mental reflexes. Much of what is done for others with these disabilities will make the museum more accessible to the elderly. Museums should also consider offering special 'reminiscence' programmes for the elderly and outreach programmes to group homes where the elderly are bedridden.

The visually impaired. Since museums are primarily a visual environment, the group which has the most difficulty with access is that which includes the blind and visually impaired. Of this group only 5 to 10 per cent can be classified as totally blind although this percentage is higher amongst children and in some regions of the world. Most museums, however, offer little to the blind. The exceptions are museums with touch exhibits.³ Guides and audio-cassettes can give verbal descriptions but these are no more than talking books and offer no real access to the objects. Every effort should be made to develop touch areas within the normal exhibits, even if only with reproductions. Tac-

3. Several examples will be given in articles below.

tile exhibits are of value not only to the blind who may be dealing with completely unfamiliar material, but also the visually impaired and the public in general.

Visually impaired persons include those who have impaired visual field, impaired visual acuity and perceptual defects. Much can be done in the museum to give these people better access. Persons who have limited vision have the greatest difficulty with exhibits that are poorly lighted. A switch at the side of an exhibit that increases illumination temporarily is one aid that can be developed. Alternatively a small signalling device which does the same thing could be made available at the reception desk. This has the additional value of limiting the number of times the illumination is increased. Lighting at floor level must also be considered. The small floor-level lights used in theatres could be put to effective use to light floor areas without casting additional light on objects.

Protruding objects, free-standing pillars and changes in floor level are particularly hazardous to the visually impaired. Warning techniques such as textured strips in the flooring should be developed. It is important that these be consistent and that their existence be made known—perhaps on the cassette-tape guide.

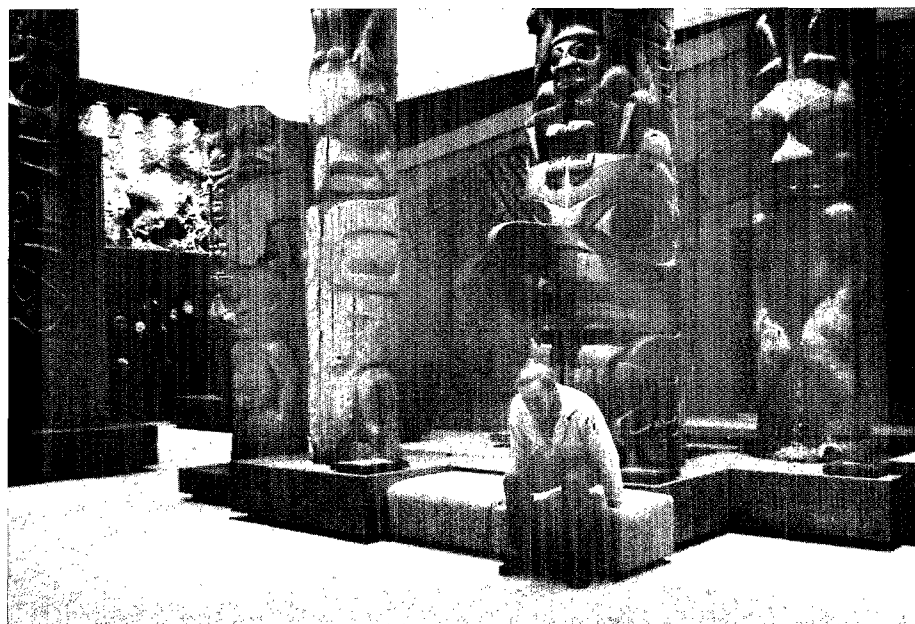
Cassette guides to the exhibits should be clear as to directions and should use as much tactile imagery as possible. Speed should be adjusted to allow enough time for the user to find the object being discussed.

Thermoform maps of the exhibits, information in Braille and printed information in large type are other aids which should be available. Braille signs at all exhibits are not necessary if audio-cassettes are available. However, Braille signs should be used on washroom doors, lift controls and other such places.

Another aid to the visually impaired is the insertion of magnifying viewing panels in the glass or framing around the exhibit. In some instances enlarged photographs showing details of paintings, etc., can be of great benefit.

Programming can be developed specifically for the visually impaired. It should involve 'hands-on' experiences. Many of the visually disabled have developed impairment later in life and need to learn how to 'see' with their hands. What better place than a museum setting? There is also additional security for these people in the confines of the lecture room.

Programming can also give access to people who are *socially disadvantaged*. Museums should make every effort to reach out to all levels of society. Extending programmes into the community at a popular level and making the entrance to the museum a welcoming space will encourage people to see the museum as 'their museum'. Staff attitudes are of extreme importance here and this leads to perhaps the most important point of this article.

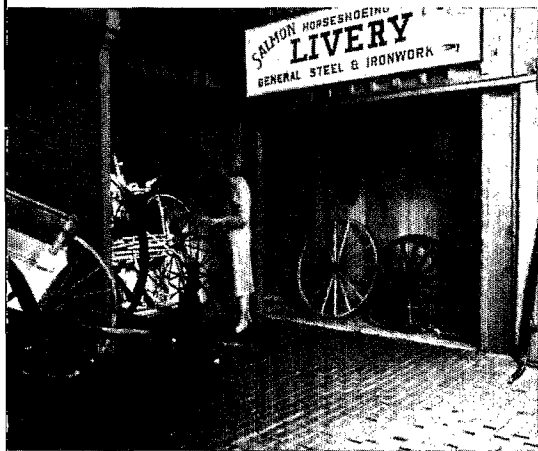
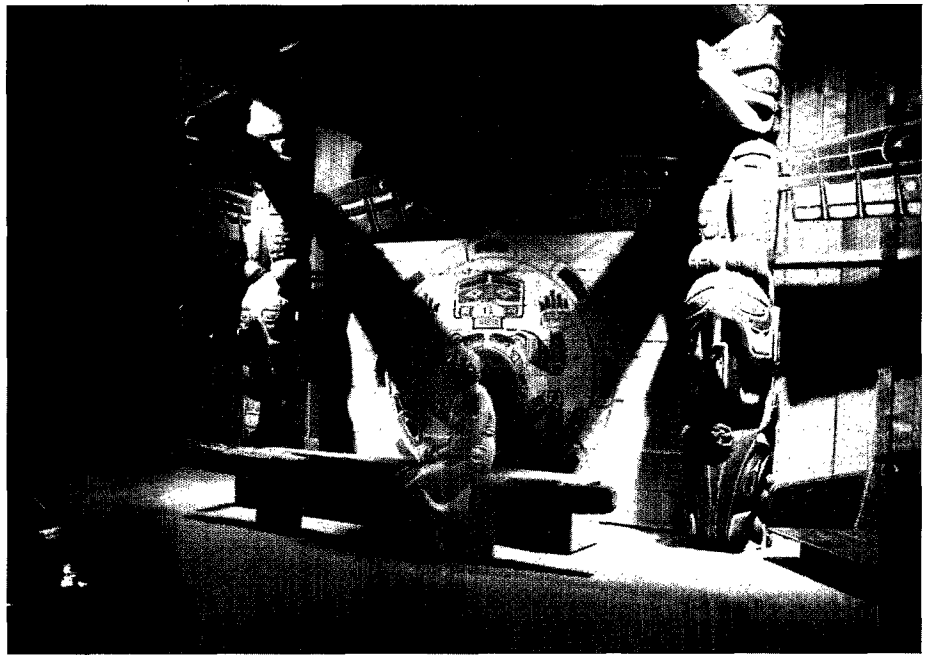


Low seating makes it impossible for those with locomotor disabilities to get up without assistance.

[Photo: Christopher Tyrrell, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.]

Low light levels, whether for effect or to protect the artefacts, make it difficult for the visually impaired to see the objects.
 [Photo: Christopher Tyrrell, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.]

Protruding objects in poorly lit areas are particularly hazardous to those with visual impairments or limited locomotor ability.
 [Photo: Christopher Tyrrell, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.]



Staff training

As has been pointed out already, being handicapped, as opposed to being disabled, is often a social situation. One way that museums can help the disabled to avoid being handicapped is to train their staff to understand this distinction, to recognize disabilities and attempt to create situations that avoid handicapping the disabled person. This training must be available to all levels of staff, from cleaners to the director. A tour specially planned for a group of retarded adults will lose all value if the security guards make disparaging comments or even look with impatience at members of the group.

A staff tuned in to the needs of the disabled will not only plan exhibits and programmes that take these needs into account but will also find ways of improving attitudes amongst the general public. This may range from merely mentioning that a certain artist or historical figure suffered from a particular disability, through exhibits about handicapping conditions [see the article by H.A. Treff, pp. 151-5 below] to positive employment policies that give disabled persons a place in the work of the museum.

The many forms of disability, some of which we are only just beginning to understand, can all interfere with a person's access to and enjoyment of the museum. Hopefully, we will be able to do much in the coming years to help people suffering from these disabilities. In the meantime, museums should take the responsibility of incorporating into their exhibit practices all those techniques that would provide better access for the disabled.

Common sense, patience and enthusiasm

Since more than one-tenth of the world's population is disabled in some way it is essential, as museums seek to develop forward-thinking policies, that they respond to the needs of this not inconsiderable minority.

But even as museums open their doors still wider, they must be realistic about their own resources and attempt to assess exactly what proportion of the disabled population will actually come to them. Just as only a small proportion of the so-called 'normal' population is attracted by the museum, only a similar if not smaller proportion of the disabled will wish or be able to visit it. The availability of willing helpers to bring in disabled visitors, for example, or time for museum staff to travel to visit the disabled are also important factors. Care-

Alison Heath

Physically disabled and wheelchair-bound boy examining seventeenth-century pewter tankard at the Geffrye Museum, London.
[Photo: Greater London Council.]



Alison Heath has an honours degree in history and archaeology from the University of Manchester. Postgraduate Certificate of Education, University of Nottingham. Between appointments as Assistant Education Officer at the Oxford City and Country Museum, then as head of the educational services of Buckinghamshire Country Museum and Education Officer for the Geffrye Museum, London, taught all age-groups, including adults. Now Education Officer for the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings of the Department of the Environment. President of the Working Party on Training, ICOM International Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA), 1974–77. Treasurer and Vice-President of CECA, 1977–80. Since 1980 Editor of *ICOM-Education*. Travel to various countries as specialist adviser in museum education. Publications include numerous articles, particularly in *Museums Journal* (1976, *Agmanz News* (August 1977) and *Museum*, Vol. xxxi, No. 3 (1979).

ful assessment must be made of all work that is planned: the tangible benefits of compassion and special effort must be balanced against the—even more tangible—limits to financial resources. If too ambitious a programme is undertaken this can easily lead to dilution of effort and limitation of effectiveness.

Where should the museum curator begin? Perhaps the most salutary first step would be to visit his own establishment himself (or someone else's if he is planning a new museum) in the company of people suffering from different handicaps and listen carefully to their problems and experiences. Or he might like to try a wheelchair for himself or even go blindfold. He will soon realize that the simplest facilities can often make the difference between a very special and memorable experience or no visit at all.

Access and mobility: basic needs

The first and most obvious problem for the physically handicapped visitor is access. Let us consider other buildings used by the public. The entrances to shops, for example, are always relatively unobstructed, with wide open doors and not even a threshold. Lifts are provided and shelving is low and accessible. They are trying to attract customers. But what about churches, banks or government offices? Perhaps their 'customers' are considered to be already sufficiently motivated so as not to need as welcoming an appearance. Tall flights of steps and heavy doors are after all an architectural statement of the importance of the building and its function.

This is obviously a simple design problem in relation to new and purpose-built museums, but in older buildings it is essential that staff should realize that a disabled visitor cannot know, without being told, that there is a portable ramp inside the building or that there is an alternative level entrance elsewhere. Very few people are brave enough to stop a complete stranger to ask him to drag them up a flight of steps.

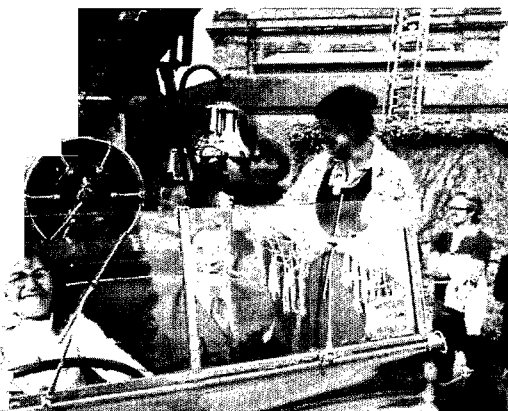
It is difficult and expensive to alter and adapt old buildings, but ramps and lifts provided for visitors in wheelchairs will prove equally useful for mothers with pushchairs and the elderly, not to mention staff moving heavy exhibits. But before museums rush to install ramps and inclines instead of steps they should understand that the ambulant disabled find slopes much more difficult to negotiate than one or two steps. It is therefore important to provide alternatives. To the visitor with bad vision steps can also prove a great hazard. They should be provided with handrails and their edges should be painted in a bright, contrasting colour to make them easily distinguishable.

Doors are the next barrier to be overcome. Are they wide enough to allow easy passage of a wheelchair? What kind of pressure or weight is needed to compensate for any automatic closing device? Many ambulant disabled people cannot exert as much as two kilograms of pressure: doors are frequently set to close at a weight of four or five kilograms. Glass doors are another problem. They are a continual danger to the partially sighted and need to be clearly marked.

If the effort has not proved too difficult and embarrassing the disabled visitor at last finds himself inside the building. Mobility around the building is the next factor to consider. Is there space for a wheelchair to pass between exhibits and are doorways easily negotiated? Are displays and labels at such a height that they can be enjoyed from a wheelchair?

Only a small proportion of people registered as blind totally lack sight. For this reason great care should be taken in exhibits to ensure that the level of light is suitable and adequate, so long as it is consistent with the requirements of conservation. Items should be displayed against clearly contrasting colours. Labels also need careful consideration: are they clearly printed on a non-reflective surface of a suitable colour? Fashionable combinations like white on fawn or two shades of brown are notoriously difficult to read even for visitors with normal sight. Again, are the labels sensibly positioned? Such location of text may be considered detrimental to design but no layout can be counted perfect if labels cannot be read with ease.

Educationally subnormal youngsters riding on a fire engine at the Leicestershire Museum of Science and Technology.
[Photo: Roger Heath.]





Student from Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre making clay flowers for use as an appliqué design on pottery, Wheal Martyn Museum.

[Photo: Photographic Department, English China Clays Group.]

Next the curator might assess refreshment rooms and toilets, which often pose the most embarrassing and difficult problems, but are essential elements in the individual visitor's enjoyment of the museum and in the integration of disabled people in the community. Can wheelchairs be drawn up to the tables? Are the tables of suitable height? Is there a menu easily visible with prices clearly marked? To the partially sighted person continually to have to ask the price of items is a further source of embarrassment. Likewise is there a toilet that will meet the design requirements of the physically handicapped? A lack of such facilities can totally ruin a pleasant day.

So far only the minimum needs of access and mobility of the individual disabled museum visitor have been considered. The next section will deal with the problems of each disability group and the potential benefits they may derive from positive planning and provision for their needs within the museum.

Practical thinking for special requirements

Although the slow motor and physical development of *mentally retarded* people may make them clumsy and un-coordinated, their physical growth is much faster than their mental development. When adult, they may still need the same supervision and support that they were given at the age of 5 or 6. In many cases handicapped children and adults are denied the experience of handling even simple domestic utensils because parents or guardians tend to be over-protective, not allowing them to do things for themselves for fear of them dropping something or getting hurt. Or they may live in institutions where things are done for them, for the sake of efficiency, by members of staff. Thus, when selecting specimens to be demonstrated, the museum curator must bear in mind that such objects must be robust.

Museum teachers should realize that mentally retarded children and adults are less curious and imaginative than others and that therefore the objects and topics for discussion should relate closely to them so as to stimulate their interest. The teacher must not be discouraged by an initial lack of response, for such children take much longer to react to new situations. A series of visits to the museum is thus more advantageous than a single visit as it gives them more opportunity to adjust. It will frequently be a matter of 'if at first you don't succeed then try again' (and again). It may be many months before any indication of benefit from a visit manifests itself.

Since mentally retarded people have a short span of attention and are easily



Blind curator tries out a tactile diagram at a seminar on museums and the handicapped.

[Photo: Roger Heath.]

distracted it might be wise to spend at least part of each visit in the museum classroom, rather than in a main display area, so that they can build up a closer understanding of a limited number of objects. They tend to persevere¹ and so enjoy repetitive tasks. They have only a limited ability to conceptualize and engage in abstract thought. Likewise they perform poorly when given tasks which require discrimination and selection: they would find it difficult to differentiate between two flint tools or even two different animals. They also need considerable training in identifying the similarities of objects that belong together. It is in these areas that visits to the museum may be particularly beneficial.

The *physically disabled* include both those whose handicap results from or is associated with abnormal brain function and those in whom this is not the case. In both groups there is a mixture of fully or partly ambulant people and those confined to wheelchairs. People with multiple handicaps such as spina-bifida, cerebral palsy and hydrocephalus suffer varying degrees of intellectual impairment. In some cases they have an advantage over those born with mental handicaps *per se* in that they may have had a number of years of training and learning prior to the onset of their disability. They may have good verbal skills but still suffer many of the disabilities of mentally handicapped people: poor dexterity, difficulties of perception and abstract conception, being easily distracted and poorly motivated. For children or adults whose physical handicaps are without brain involvement there may be secondary problems of emotional disturbance that create learning difficulties. Apart from this, however, their problems relating to museum visits are mainly those of mobility.

The *deaf and hard of hearing* are the least disadvantaged group in terms of museum visiting, essentially a visual experience. Where multiple disabilities exist, however, deafness may frequently be included, and the needs of the hard of hearing should therefore not be ignored. Maureen Gee has already mentioned the need for adequate communication aids. Museums may also wish to install in their teaching areas cheaply produced 'induction loop' systems which enable a person with a hearing aid to pick up voice or music transmitted through a cable linked to a microphone placed by the source of sound. Staff should also remember that since many deaf people lip-read they should therefore try to speak clearly and make sure that they face their audience.

The disabilities of the *blind and partially sighted* are perhaps the most emotive of all the handicaps. It is understandable that most museums have concentrated their efforts and resources in this area. Almost all have at some time attempted to provide additional handling facilities, such as a special permanent gallery, or temporary exhibitions, or a small table or box with exhibits that can be specially handled, or additional handling sessions in a museum classroom, with members of staff to help, discuss and explain. The relative merits of these various methods have been discussed in great depth in many learned articles and seminars over the past decade. The preceding article also examines some of them. Indeed, being able to get close to an object and where possible, to touch it, is most important for the sight-impaired visitor. Blind people very much appreciate the opportunity to be independent so psychologically it is important that consideration be given to increasing their mobility. The use of cassette-tape guides can help both to orient the visitor and give him information on objects or displays he might otherwise not 'see'. Tactile plans of the museum and diagrams of exhibits can also be very beneficial. The possibility of providing floor-coverings of varying texture in open-circulation areas and around individual exhibits can also aid mobility. The basic provision of adequately visible labels has already been discussed but it would seem that the provision of tactile labels may only be feasible on a temporary basis. There are a number of different forms of tactile writing and only a very small number of blind people master even one such language. This makes it exceedingly difficult to provide tactile labels that will answer all needs.

1. Continue action etc. for unusually or excessively long time (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

Adding dimensions for ALL visitors

Every visitor is special but some need a greater degree of specialist help than others. It becomes apparent in discussing the facilities necessary for disabled visitors that really what is required is general improvement in the standard of exhibitions and their interpretation, and the basic facilities museums offer. Museum exhibits that appeal to all the senses—touch, taste, smell and hearing as well as sight—are of benefit to all our visitors. This is the way that many exciting, and modern museum displays are developing. Bird song in the natural-history display, the weight or texture of ceramics or textiles, the smell of wood-shavings in a craftsman's workshop, the sound of the musical instruments on display—such small things can serve to awaken all our senses and can involve all visitors more deeply in understanding the nature of the exhibit. Obviously this approach is not practical with all objects in museum collections but could be actively pursued in most primary displays.

The possibility of linking museum experience with field-work should also be explored. Disabled visitors have been known to overcome every disability to pursue their own particular interest whether it has taken them to seashore or mountain top in pursuit of the natural flora and fauna or to an archeological site in pursuit of first-hand experience and knowledge. Always remember, however, that these experiences are equally valuable for ordinary members of the public; it would be unfortunate if this work were to become exclusively the prerogative of handicapped visitors.

Visitors with special needs should be integrated with the general visitor. This is why an improvement in the overall standard of museum provision is essential. Handicapped visitors should not be encouraged to see themselves as different or separate except perhaps in the case of those most severely handicapped whose leaders must be allowed to establish their own bounds of limitations. It is also beneficial for members of museum staff and the general public to mix freely with handicapped visitors; they often feel equally embarrassed and nervous, because until recently a policy of separating the so-called 'normal' members of the population from handicapped people has been pursued.

It is to be hoped that this will no longer be the case. Having spoken of the importance of integration of disabled people in the community, there is perhaps no need to discuss the possibility of employing handicapped people at all levels within the museum. There are many jobs for which they are equally well if not better suited than so-called 'normal' people. Their disability should in no way bar them from employment.

Museums can also help disabled people in the creative field. The museum visit may easily be linked to creative activity, which is frequently the greatest lack in their lives. Children are encouraged at an early age to express their own personality and independence through a variety of forms of highly personal creativity. Handicapped people so rarely find means of self-expression and often never achieve more than careful imitation of others. In this they may need to experiment extensively with a wide range of approaches and media; they must not be defeated by apparent lack of success but keep on trying. The potential benefit to the individual is immeasurable.

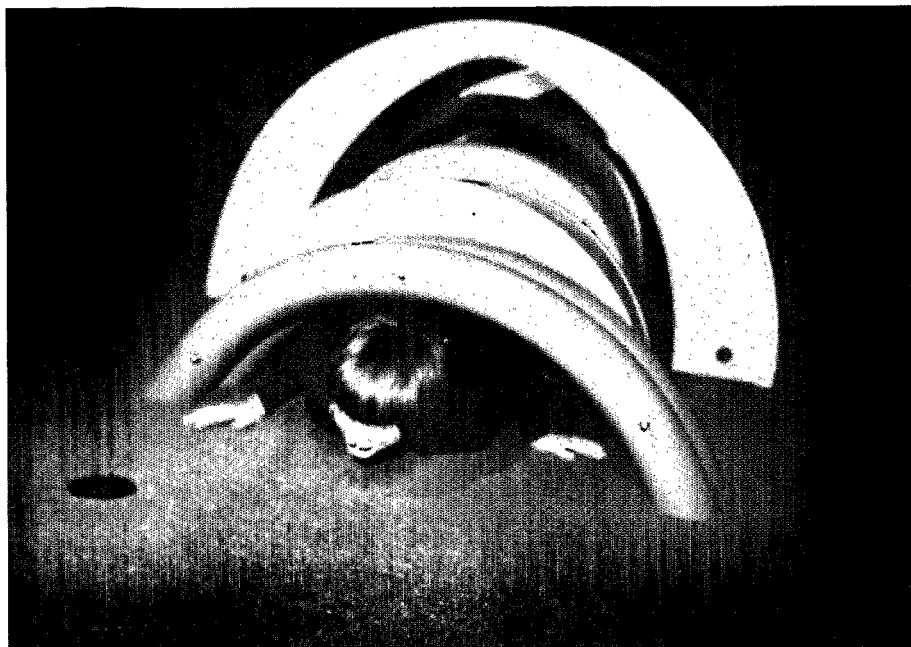
Public relations and human contact

Despite all the work that museums may do in the special preparation of buildings and exhibits and even in the training of staff to receive disabled visitors it is of little benefit if the latter are unaware of the special facilities and interest that the museum can offer. It may be that the first step towards integration of handicapped people in the museum community is a crusading one, ensuring by careful and caring publicity that facilities are widely known. Initially the museum curator may have to go out to seek contact with potential visitors, through specialist central organizations and societies. Many of these organizations have newsletters, meetings and information services and would be delighted to receive material. Many television and radio stations have

Adding dimensions for *all* visitors. The Wadsworth Atheneum at Hartford, Connecticut, United States, is the country's oldest public art museum and contains one of its finest collections. Here, disabled visitors have taken an active part in shaping the concept and exhibition of the 'Lions Gallery of the Senses', where CECA-member Mary Pope Cheney has carried out a number of special programmes designed to interest all visitors. The *Dialogue for the Senses* exhibition (1972), for example, was designed by a team of artists, musicians and sculptors from the School of Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Visitors were asked to explore, visually and non-visually, at many conceptual levels, the basic art elements of form, line, space, texture, scale and direction and to consider the basic elements of life itself through heat, air and water. The exhibition was designed to evoke a very personal response. Here a blind student explores the difficult concept of overhead space.

[Photo: Wadsworth Atheneum.]





special magazine programmes for handicapped listeners and will gladly publicize special events. Museum staff may consider the possibility of 'taking the museum' to the centres where disabled people meet, work and live. It may be more economical in financial terms to move one person to a centre than to move a whole group to the museum: but this need only be a starting-point. Building from an initial contact that allows the group of disabled people to handle unfamiliar objects in the security of reassuringly familiar surroundings, it is easier to encourage them to take the large step of visiting the gallery for themselves, once personal contact has been made. The encouragement of disabled people to visit and enjoy museums will make considerable demands upon their staff, but not in financial terms. The provision of ramps, additional lavatories, the improvement of lighting and the clear marking of staircases are all items of minor expenditure. The real pressure will be upon human resources: staff must be better prepared and trained, they will need to be more considerate, and be prepared to give up their time to provide special handling sessions and creative activities. Additional thought will need to be given to gallery and exhibition design. Careful publicizing of museum facilities and activities will also take time. There may be little indication that the additional effort is appreciated. Selfless patience, enthusiasm and ingenuity will be essential, but the benefits for our own less fortunate neighbours will, in the long term, be immeasurable.

△
The *Forms for Dance* exhibition (1973) consisted of sculptures by Doris Chase. The sculptor created bold coloured forms which could be set in motion at a touch but became more interesting as people moved through, with and about them, creating an endless variety of designs while gaining awareness of form, space, texture and balance. The exhibition of kinetic sculptures was so popular that sighted students made video tapes of their own interplay with the larger forms. Children cried if they could not get into the gallery and when they were taken out—no doubt a 'first' for an art-museum programme. The blind visitors' enthusiastic response to these initial exhibitions helped to convince the general public of the validity of the gallery concept.
◁[Photos: Wadsworth Atheneum.]

Sheltered employment to help shoulder responsibilities

Johannes Sivesind

Johannes Sivesind was born in 1921 at Toren, southern Norway. Raised on a farm that had belonged to his family since the fourteenth century, his keen interest in history and the cultural heritage was aroused at a very early age. M.A. in linguistics and history of civilization. Research on topics such as runic writings, comparative cultural research, toponymy, local tradition and folklore. Joined the Toten Museum, where he later became its curator for twelve years. Chief conservation officer for the county of Østfold since 1967 and director of the Borgarsyssel Museum. Besides his work to safeguard the cultural heritage of the county, Johannes Sivesind has been responsible for harnessing the resources of the museum to carrying out an active policy of sheltered employment for the disabled.

The Borgarsyssel Museum at Sarpsborg, Norway, is a local museum which explores the history of the rural communities of Østfold county. Established in 1921 around a group of old buildings and farm-lands, it teaches its visitors about rural technology and traditions of the past, using the memories and skills of live informants. It fulfils major teaching functions and welcomes groups of schoolchildren, trainee teachers, etc. It thus plays a very active role in the cultural, educational and social life of the county. One of its most original features is that about half of its staff of approximately eighty people are disabled in various ways. The museum has employed them as part of its social task and very successful results have been obtained in guiding disabled people back to their original occupations through the use of vocational skills in museum activities. In the following article, the director of the Borgarsyssel Museum draws some general conclusions about a responsibility for which a museum of this type is ideally equipped.

There are two main causes of incapacity to work: physical injury, which may make it difficult or impossible for a person to carry out the tasks he was able to do before, and stress or other mental or social factors, which may make it difficult for him to cope with his new life situation. Most people in the first group also have to contend with the additional problems of the second, for they suffer the handicap of being unable to function as they themselves and their environment expect them to.

For over twenty years the author has promoted a method of sheltered employment that allows people who have been victims of such incapacity to return to a normal rhythm of work. Considerable confusion surrounds the concepts of rehabilitation (which came into widespread use in Norway after special legislation was introduced), retraining and sheltered employment. So it may be helpful to explore the basic reasoning behind the activities that our museum offers.¹

Though the word 'rehabilitation' actually means restoring to effectiveness by training (especially after imprisonment or illness and, by implication 'return to work'), it is often interpreted wrongly as a synonym for retraining. This is because of the form organized rehabilitation schemes have generally taken.

We have always attempted, however, to guide the person concerned back to his original occupation by involving him in the activities of our museum in a capacity that enables him to draw on his vocational skills. Persons in sheltered employment, for example, return to working life, and go back to their former occupations. This is surely the perfect solution. Some disabled people, especially the young, wish to embark on a vocational training course that in many cases bears little relation to the work they did at the museum. Our aim is general rehabilitation as opposed to shunting people into particular lines of work.

1. Some degree of simplification and generalization is inevitable when attempting to present a broad picture. Here I have tried to tone down sweeping statements by using words such as 'often', 'many' or 'as a rule'. Similarly, there is a limit to such qualifications. Since we are dealing with individuals who cannot be slotted neatly into categories, I hope that the present description will be seen as a long experience compressed into a couple of pages.

Restoring a sense of identity

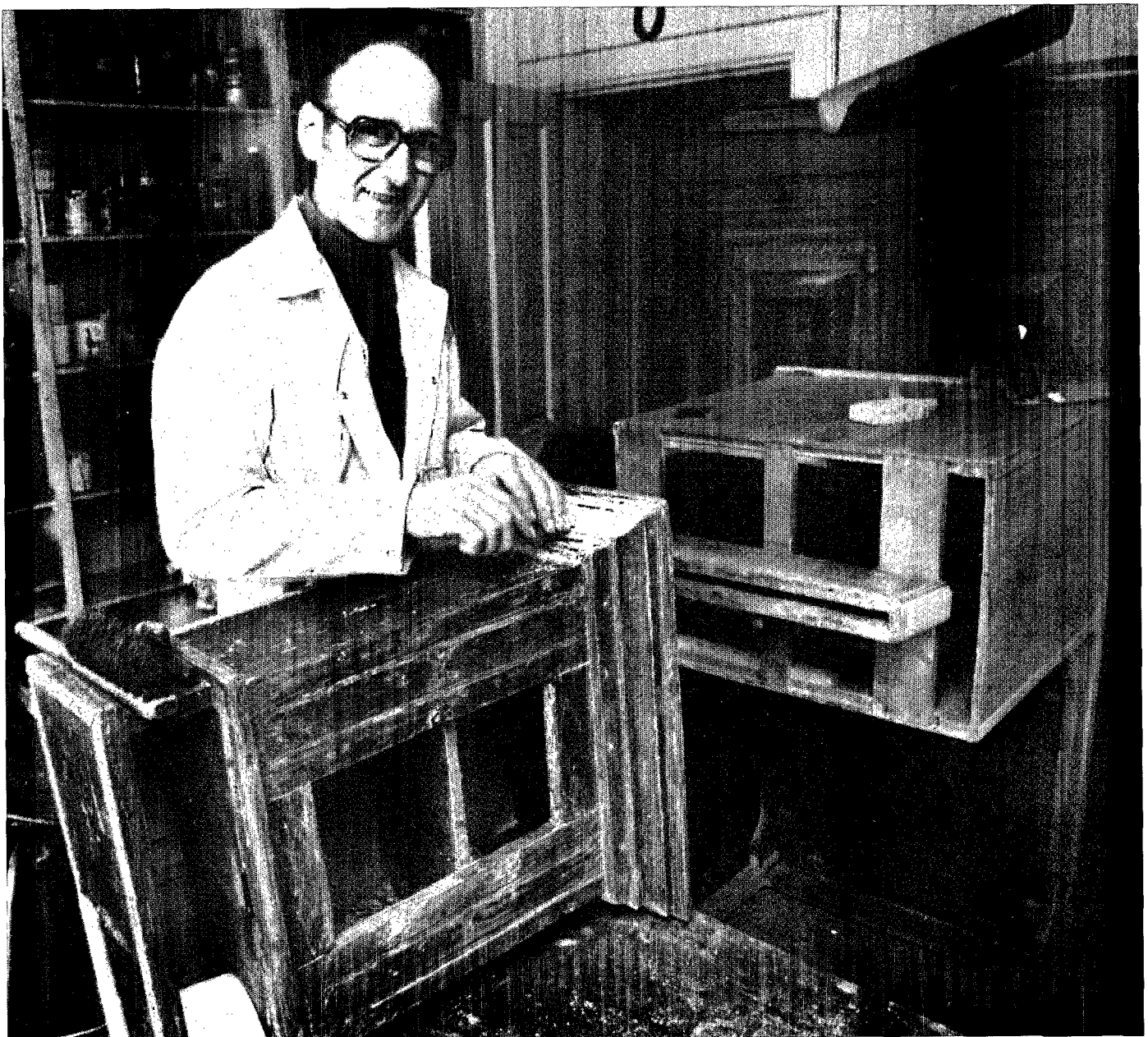
The first thing that must be done is to restore their sense of identity. After a long period of illness, during which people hear their condition referred to continually in mystical, pompous and 'menacing' Latin terms, many become over-anxious and obsessed. This is a vicious circle that must somehow be broken. The person concerned must find work that actively involves him to make him forget himself and his symptoms.

Most of the people who come here are difficult or chronic cases, and may have to remain a long time in sheltered jobs. We also arrange exchanges with the social-medicine department of the nearby Fredrikstad Central Hospital, so that patients who are not making any progress there can spend some time with us. More normal work surroundings, away from an institutional setting, has often provided fresh stimulus for further treatment.

In many cases it is fairly easy to ascertain whether a patient is ready for open employment. Often returning strength is reflected in outbursts of aggression and discontent which, unpleasant as they may be, are a sign that our work is nearly at an end.

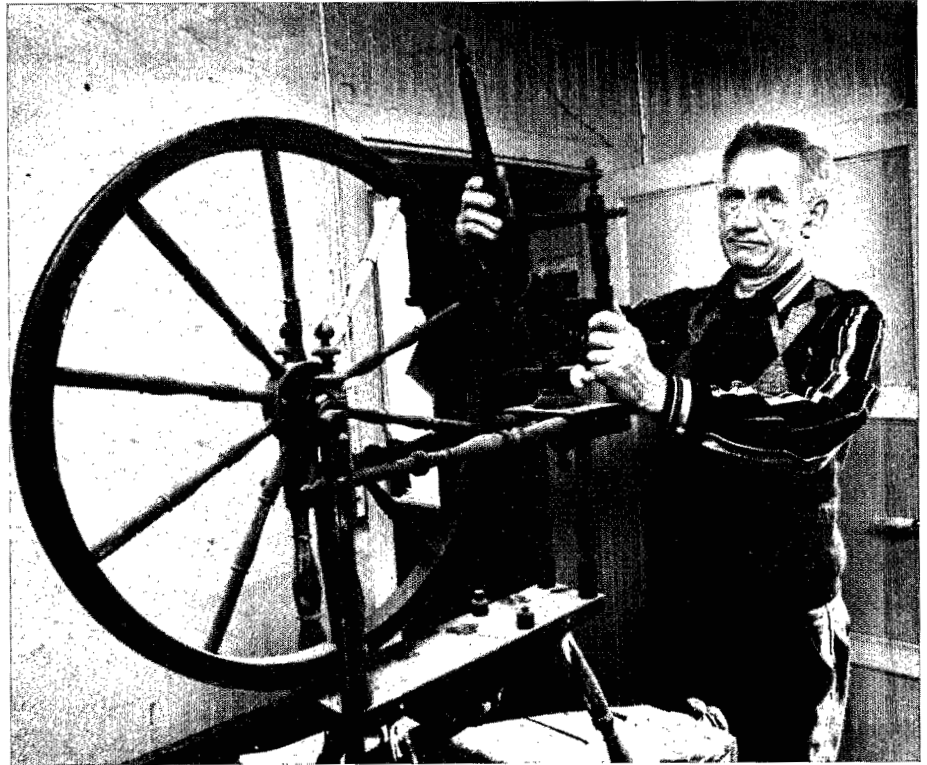
This reaction is very natural and can be compared to the 'difficult stages' children go through when they find they can walk and talk and are eager to

BORGARSYSEL MUSEUM, Sarpsborg.
Paint-technician Ragnar Jenson restoring a
nineteenth-century cupboard.
[Photo: Jarl M. Andersen.]



Carpenter James Kristiansen restoring an old spinning wheel.

[Photo: Jarl M. Andersen.]



Organ-builder Trond Mathiesen and carpenter James Kristiansen preparing parts for the restoration of an organ.

[Photo: Jarl M. Andersen.]

shake off the help on which they previously depended. Rather the same thing happens in puberty, when teenagers discover that they are physically as strong as adults and can cope with many situations just as well without their parents' assistance.

Though we do our best to create as normal a work environment as possible, relations with the welfare authorities become a source of irritation once the person feels he can stand on his own feet again. New arrivals, who need time before they can find their way around, are another cause of annoyance. The 'old hands' are reminded of their own period of dependence and tend to focus their irritation on the person(s) in charge. Usually an outburst followed by a short chat help to solve the problem. Those who repress their feelings are the worst off, as their aggression may persist behind a mask of politeness.

Virtually everyone who comes here is suffering from stress. It is therefore important for us to avoid pushing them around in any way and to allow them as far as possible to plan their work as they wish. They are assigned specific tasks but given the utmost freedom to decide how to perform them—perhaps

not the best recipe for efficiency but the most effective way of rebuilding self-confidence.

When we bring people gradually back into contact with their former occupation in a changed context, they cease progressively to be afraid of the job they were unable to manage. Self-respect comes when they realize that it is merely certain external factors that have affected them and that otherwise they are quite able to cope with the work. Most of them build up pride in what they are doing and experience a sensation of defeat if they transfer to a job which does not draw on the fund of experience they have accumulated over the years. As all jobs nowadays are changing fast, it is advisable to update skills through courses or a period spent in a modern work environment before returning to open employment.

Calm and security are the main prerequisites for the healing process. The established system of six months' rehabilitation therefore seems positively harmful, as it breeds a constant state of anxiety for weeks or even months before each medical check-up. Another arrangement should therefore be found.

Many young people have joined our museum recently. Some of them have dropped out of school on health or social grounds while others have failed to find work after leaving school or are suffering from nervous or other disturbances induced by their environment. Most of them have never worked. Some find a temporary refuge here while others transfer, after a time, to a training course; all too many commute to and fro between us and the social-medicine department before any progress is achieved.

Heritage conservation is excellent therapy

The major social problem confronting the social-welfare and employment services is the large group of people for whom it is hard to find jobs and who become institutionalized in that role, at considerable cost to society. From the

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NIGER, Niamey. An African example of active sheltered employment. Niamey's interdisciplinary museum has two special craft-work sections. Blind and physically handicapped persons work in the second section, arranged so as to help them take their place in the life of the community. Our photo shows the leather-goods workshop and was first published in an article entitled 'Action to Help the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Niger National Museum, Niamey', which appeared in *Museum*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, 1976. Each blind person works with a physically handicapped one, a combination that produces excellent results. The article explained that the manufacture of certain leather articles is their exclusive speciality. At the time of writing there were twenty-five of them, all working in premises built for their use, and under the guidance of two supervisors specialized in work with leather and skins. It is hoped to publish a further account of work carried out here since 1976 and particularly during the International Year of Disabled Persons in a future (1982) issue of *Museum*.



cultural angle, the problem is a different one: a thousand and one jobs to be done and an acute shortage of willing hands. If tackled jointly, the solution comes quite naturally, almost like a chemical reaction.

Work involving conservation of our cultural and historical heritage is well suited as therapy for people who do not fit into the system and are suffering from stress. The work surroundings are restful, and contact with objects dating back to long before our stress-laden age provides a steady anchor in the hectic rush of modern life. According to doctors, the work atmosphere here generally exercises a very positive influence. The fact that each section is headed by experts acclaimed throughout Norway for their professional skills imparts a special sense of security. The multidisciplinary environment, where views on current employment problems can be exchanged over a cup of coffee with people from a very different work background, acts as a stimulus.

On arrival many are withdrawn, anxious and over-respectful towards people with academic qualifications. However, everyone treats each other as equals here and the atmosphere is very relaxed. We have been able to observe how a stay here fosters social commitment in people who had never before shown any interest in public affairs. This is important for lasting improvement, as one major expression of stress is emotional inadequacy in the face of an all-powerful and efficient social system, where people see themselves as helpless cogs in the wheel.

It is not my habit to collect testimonials from those whom we are helping to rehabilitate, as this can disturb them and create a temporary setback. Such views may indeed not be reliable, as their mood can swing from bright optimism one day to darkest pessimism the next. Yet our records contain one statement made in special circumstances. Since it is both factual and unemotionally expressed, I should like to quote a few lines from it:

At the Sarpsborg Local Community Museum... nobody is branded or classified as a rehabilitation case. On the contrary, each person works on the same footing as all the other members of the staff. The expectations they have of him have a positive effect. In short, the whole time he will meet with challenges and responsibility he is capable of shouldering and will still be treated with sympathy on days when he is less able to cope. This breeds both satisfaction and security. Flexibility and the feeling of equality are perhaps the two most important factors in the rehabilitation process. The fact that many people here do not really know which of the staff are 'rehabilitation cases' and which are 'normal' employees is just one indication, in my view, of the museum's truly rehabilitating contribution. To sum up, it is extremely valuable for someone preparing for open employment to be placed in such a mixed cultural and social environment.

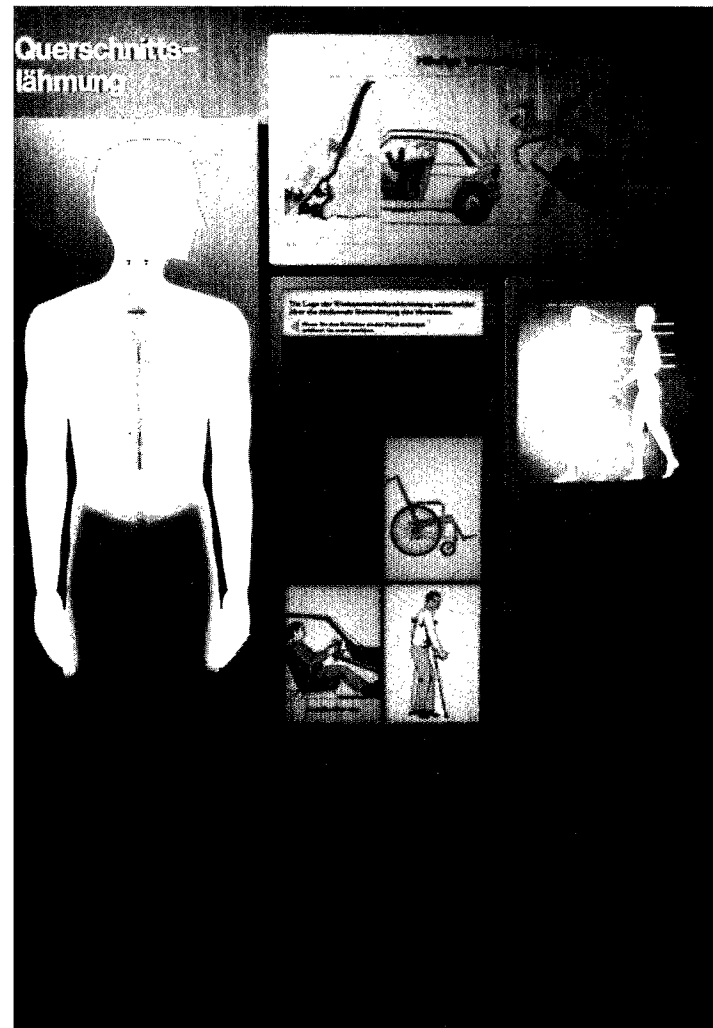
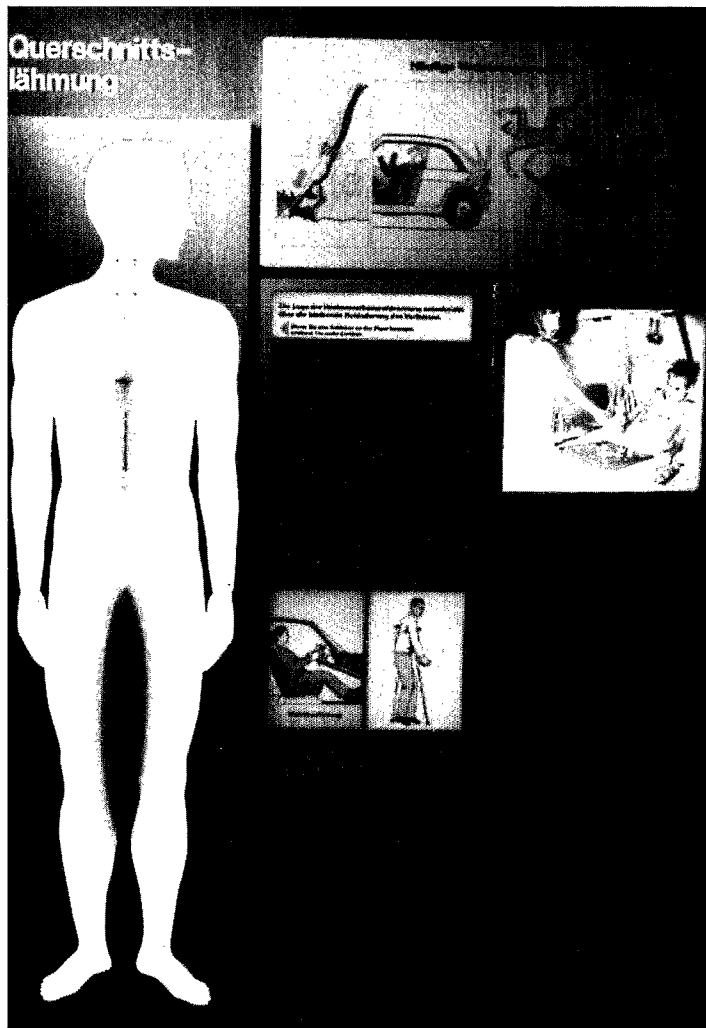
[Translated from Norwegian]

Educating the public

Hans-Albert Treff

Hans-Albert Treff was born in 1940. Doctorate in biology at Munich University, 1966. Scientific assistant at the Zoological Institute of Munich University, 1967-70. Qualification as high-school teacher in 1971. Deputy head of the planning staff for the Natural History Education Centre, Munich, a proposed new natural history museum, since 1972.



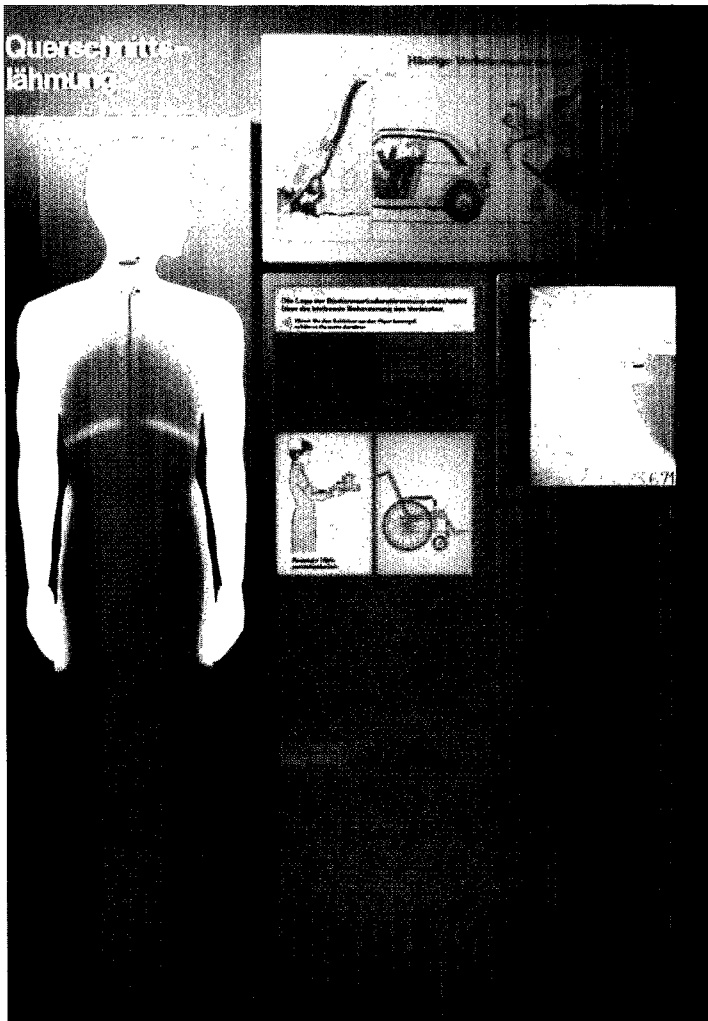


1. A noteworthy exhibit that did try to achieve this purpose was *What if I Couldn't?*, first organized at the Children's Museum, Boston, in 1976, then revised and re-installed in 1979 in that museum's new barrier-free location. In 1980 the exhibition was also circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). Organized with financial assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts, it was a participatory exhibition, creating an environment through which non-disabled visitors could learn about handicapping conditions and explore some of their own feelings. It was divided into six areas of exploration: visual impairments, auditory impairments, physical handicaps, learning disabilities, emotional disturbances and mental retardation. Each area provided information about disabilities, simulation (with devices and appliances to test) and information about remedial measures. A multi-media kit for elementary schools was also prepared on the basis of the original exhibit; it presents children with 'a non-threatening straightforward picture of what it might be like to have a disability'. Further details about *What if I Couldn't?* in its various forms will be given in a future issue of *Museum*.—Ed.

Although museum authorities may devote a good deal of effort during the International Year for Disabled Persons and thereafter considering how museums can be made more accessible to the disabled, they are unlikely to give much thought to educating the public at large, through museum displays, about the biological, medical, social and political aspects of the problem of disability. But if museums are to live up to their frequently voiced claim of serving a socio-political function surely they must transmit this educational message. The main purposes of educational work on this subject must be, first, to bring about a more enlightened attitude on the part of the public towards disabled persons in order to improve the situation of the latter and, second, to disseminate knowledge and information with a view to preventing the occurrence of disabilities to the maximum extent possible.¹

Instincts and social attitudes

People's attitudes towards the disabled are determined on the one hand by moral and ethical principles and patterns of behaviour shaped by their cultural environment and on the other by certain instincts inherited from our animal ancestors in the course of biological evolution. Unfortunately, far too little research has been done on the expulsion by animal groups of members of their own species who deviate from the norm because of debility, physical defects or other factors. Animal reactions may range from violent aggression to killing the victim. This type of behaviour assists the process of natural selection through which disabled animals are in any case deprived of all prospects of survival. If this expulsion instinct has remained fixed in the human genotype,

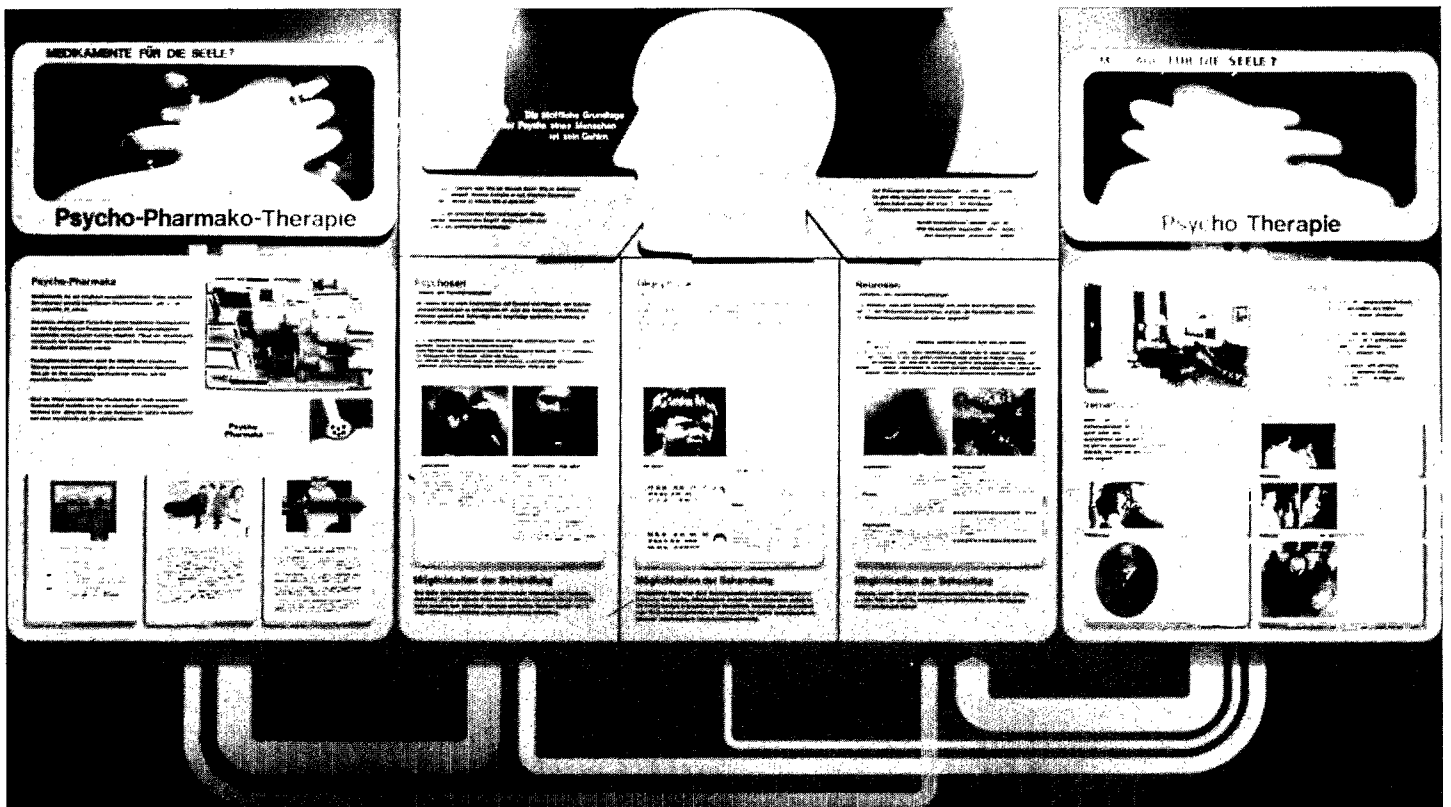


DEUTSCHES MUSEUM, Munich. Panels concerning paraplegia from the *Nerves and Brain* exhibition presented by the Natural History Education Centre in 1977. One of the main objects of this exhibition is to show the causes and effects of as many diseases and disabilities as possible connected with the nervous system. On the outlined human figure, lesions can be simulated at various levels of the spinal cord by moving a lever (three different positions are shown). The parts of the body affected by paralysis are indicated by a light that goes on and off. Illuminated diagrams in the centre show the consequences of each type of paralysis. To the right of each panel, an audio-visual display describes forms of treatment and rehabilitation, and also the difficulties encountered in our society by the victims of disability. The exhibition was a great success and since 1977 it has been retained at the Deutsches Museum, in another exhibition area on the second floor.

[Photo: H.-A. Treff.]

This four-metre panel gives an overall view of the three main types of mental illness—psychosis, mental retardation and neurosis—and the principal methods of chemical (left) and psychotherapeutic (right) treatment.

[Photo: H.-A. Treff.]



Audio-visual programmes give information about morphologically detectable brain damage caused by migraines, circulatory problems, tumours and other factors. Possible diagnoses and therapies as well as their effects are also the subject of these programmes. There is also a cinema hall where short video programmes are shown on children affected by brain damage, psychosis, epilepsy and drugs.

[Photo: H.-A. Treff.]



it may account for our past and present behaviour towards the disabled and at the same time provide a major clue as to why it is so difficult to effect a radical and durable change in this behaviour. It is not sufficient to make a once-and-for-all appeal to reason on the lines of 'this is how we used to do it but nowadays things have changed'.

What we need is intensive and continual education through instruction and information, for which purpose all available media and educational facilities, including museums, should be employed. It is gratifying to note that many natural history and even technological and other museums are already devoting space to the subject of human biology. However it is very striking that attention is focused almost exclusively on normal biological processes and phenomena. In museum displays that provide information on human reproduction, for instance, the only babies born are healthy and happy ones. Yet it is absolutely essential, when describing the emergence of human life, to show how genetic, pre-natal developmental and post-natal deviations and defects can result in all kinds of disabilities. The uninformed generally seek to explain these with the aid of an imagination fraught with prejudice and discrimination, which in turn of course influences their behaviour.

This example taken from the biology of reproduction is only one instance among many. Human biology provides many opportunities for describing the causes and effects of abnormality, even those of a sociological nature. When faced with the option in our own work several years ago of devoting some 400 square metres of exhibition space either to problems of the nervous system or to those of the circulatory system, we were swayed in favour of the former above all on account of the socio-political factors that arise in connection with the nervous system, which is, in a way, the Achilles' heel of the human organism.²

2. Since the end of the Second World War, Munich has had no natural history museum. In 1970 the Bavarian State Government decided to establish a Natural History Education Centre that was to be equipped with the most modern display facilities. According to the original plan, the museum should have been opened in 1980 but the projected programme designed by the Copenhagen architects Dissing & Weitling, was selected in March 1981 on the basis of an architectural competition. The building will contain 10,000 square metres of exhibition space. A team of planners is working on the conceptual framework and exhibition details for the museum. Man and his manifold and changing relations with the environment will be one of the main themes. In 1977, the *Nerves and Brain* exhibition served as a pilot project to test the didactic and methodological assumptions of the planning team.

Root causes...

As with diseases in general, disabilities are caused by endogenous or exogenous conditions and factors which also frequently operate in combination. For instance, changes in the genetic system may be of an exclusively endogenous nature or they may be linked to exogenous factors. Exogenously induced disabilities stem from disturbances in the normal physiological assimilation of food (hunger, malnutrition, etc.) from physical influences (injuries, effects of radiation, etc.), chemical influences (drugs, poisons, etc.), animate influences (viruses, bacteria, etc.) and not least from influences in the individual's own social environment, which in the case of mental disease cannot be underestimated.

It would be going far beyond the scope of this commentary to attempt to explain in more detail the causes referred to above and to undertake a more detailed analysis and comparison of their significance for disabilities. Alongside the spectacular agents of disability such as Thalidomide or Oxychinoline, which the terrible drug catastrophes involving several thousand victims have made familiar to us, we have to consider other factors. Alcohol, for example, is to blame for innumerable cases of disability. Hunger leads to disability in many millions of children each year, because malnutrition during the embryonic period, and especially in the first two years of life, engenders serious and irreversible brain damage.

Besides the clearly established causes of disability, there are many uncertain ones which are particularly difficult to evaluate. In general, it seems ironic that although an ever-increasing proportion of the agents of disability are theoretically under our control, the number of disabled persons is still growing continually. If this dilemma is to be resolved, a general learning process must be set in motion, which can only prove effective and provoke a change in present conditions if it involves as many people as possible. And this is where museums can play a part. With lamentable irresponsibility, our technological museums describe only the advantages of modern technological and civilizing achievements and capabilities, and only a small minority of ethnological museums are prepared to intercede on behalf of the peoples afflicted by hunger and disease whose artefacts they display in their museums. These particular museums are mentioned only by way of example. Museums of all kinds have a duty to consider what kind of active contribution they can make to resolving the truly fundamental human problem inherent in the second educational objective of explaining to their visitors some of the root causes of disabilities.

[*Translated from German*]

Disability and the developing world

Norman Acton

Museum presents extracts from an article that appeared in a special issue of the Unesco Courier: 'The Handicapped Tenth of Humanity' (January 1981). The author, Norman Acton, is Secretary-General of Rehabilitation International, the world's largest federation of organizations providing services for the disabled. Key passages from his article are reproduced below; they are thought-provoking in relation to the questions raised by and about museums throughout this issue.

If the assumption that at least one in ten of the population is likely to be born with or acquire a significant disability is applied to the developing areas of the world, this means that we find in those countries at least 300 million, and probably more, people with disabilities. These are the places where we find the world's least advantaged people—those for whom poverty, hunger, ignorance, disease, misery and hopelessness are the only conditions of life. Most of these people live either in one of some 2 million rural villages where the population ekes out a traditional existence with little or no benefit from the resources and capabilities of modern society, or they live in one of the vast and squalid slums which are growing and festering in and around many major metropolises....

Even when rehabilitation programmes are in operation, as they are in many cities in the developing countries, their services do not reach these people—the residents of the rural areas and the urban slums....

Thanks to a study of the situation of handicapped children being carried out by Rehabilitation International with assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), I am able to offer some generalizations that I am certain are valid for the great majority of the people living in such areas.

The first has to do with the dreadful implications of the combination of disability and poverty. Either one may cause the other, and their presence in combination has a tremendous capacity to destroy the lives of people with impairments and to impose on families burdens that are too crushing to bear.

We have not come to grips with the interactions between these two forces—the frequency with which untreated impairment starts or accelerates the collapse of a family's already fragile economic base, the degree to which social and economic deprivation are fundamental causes of impairment, and of the escalation of impairment into permanent disability. We do not yet think of services to prevent impairment and to rehabilitate disabled persons as being basic components of economic and social development because we have not yet faced the evidence to be found out there in the villages and *barrios* and *favelas* that they are.

Second, we are finding that, when programmes to assist in the development of the community reach it, the benefits go last and least to those families that are burdened with both poverty and disability, usually because the family with a disabled member has been to some degree rejected from the mainstream of community life and resources. Within the family, it is too often the child with the impairment who is denied the chance for better food, for education, for medical care, for social and intellectual stimulation, even when these benefits do become available to his or her sisters and brothers.

Third, and directly connected with everything I am saying, there is an abysmal lack of accurate information about disability, its causes and consequences, and about what we can do about these things; and an equally appalling wealth of misinformation, prejudice, superstition and fear. This is a major factor in the family's inadequate reaction to the problem when it arises; it is a fundamental reason for the community's ostracizing individuals and families that are affected with disability; it exists in the institutions that might be helping, but are not—the health centre, the school, the religious grouping; it permeates all echelons of government from the village chief to the ministers of health, education, welfare, labour, community development, planning and whatever else may exist; and it is endemic in the representatives of international and

other organizations who are advising on the procedures and priorities of development, and administering international assistance. This absence of information and understanding, and the manner in which it reinforces the traditional distorted concepts of disability which flourish throughout the world, does much to conceal the real magnitude of the problem and to confuse everyone's thinking about the solutions.

Fourth, these factors combine to produce attitudes and patterns of individual and social behaviour that are themselves important causes of disability and of handicapped lives. Children with even minor impairments are often stigmatized as crippled or blind or deaf or retarded and shut off from the very support and stimulation that would enable them to develop and function in society. Adults with certain categories of disability, varying with traditions and culture, are denied participation in the basic forms of social life—the productive activities of the community, its institutions of government, marriage and parenthood—more because of the stigma attached to disability than because it practically limits the capacity for action.

These social forces are not unique to the developing areas; they are well known in every part of the world. In general, however, in the developing world, the individual's role in the community is much more rigidly defined by the circumstances of the family and its traditional relationships and his or her self-image and confidence are derived from the capacity to fulfil that role in the social context in which it has been evolved. Thus when, because of the functional limitations associated with an impairment or because of the stigmatization of the disabled person, he or she is not permitted to grow into and fulfil the traditional role, the individual is very likely to become a non-person, an outcast without value to self, to the family or to the community.

Fifth, at least 90 per cent and probably more of whatever rehabilitation services exist in the developing areas have been designed

and activated on the basis of models found in the industrialized West, and have been assisted and staffed by people trained in those models. This international co-operation and assistance has taken place almost entirely in the past thirty years. It has produced some islands of excellence—centres, schools and programmes that are performing as well as the models from which they have been derived—and workers of great dedication and skill. Two crucial problems remain. First, the totality of the existing services reach at best a few thousand people in the areas where we estimate there are at least 300 million with disabilities and an additional 2 million each year. And second, we may question whether the concepts of rehabilitation services which have evolved in the industrialized West are necessarily appropriate for areas with quite different economic and social situations.

The rehabilitation model that has dominated the scene both in the industrialized West and in our international assistance activity has three working parts: fancy buildings, elaborate equipment and highly specialized professional personnel. We have evolved standards for each of these components in the most sophisticated setting with unlimited research-and-development funds, and have cloaked these standards in an aura so sacred that our friends in the developing world are led to believe that anything different is unacceptable....

It has been our practice, and the burden of the example we export, to lift both the problem and the person with the problem out of the social context in which they exist and to attempt to find a solution in a new context of our making. We have only slowly learned that a person with a disability is also a person with a lot of other things: with a family, with traditions, with customs, with tastes and appetites, with fears and apprehensions, with pride and ambition, and with a culture through which these elements are integrated. The foundation of the thinking we have exported has been to remove the individual from everything in his or her life except the impairment and to concentrate on that. We have, to all practical purposes, ignored the rich array of support that is ready to be activated in the community, in the family, and in the individual with the impairment.

Numbers six and seven are ideas that apply to all international aid for development, and are directly relevant to our concerns. Number six is the principle of social magnetism. It says that, by and large, when we venture into the developing world, we find our greatest empathy with the people who can speak our language, who share some of our ideas about how society should be organized and with whom we feel comfortable. People who meet these criteria are of course usually people who, for one reason or another, have had a Western education and acculturation, who understand the conceptual basis on which our human assistance programmes are based, and who aspire

to a similar, albeit inappropriate, set of services in their countries. Please understand me, some of my dearest friends in the world are in the category I have just described, and I fully understand the roles they have played in motivating developing activity, but the hard reality is that they do not always comprehend the real dimensions of the disability problem as it affects all the people of their countries, and their reinforcement of our parochial concepts does not necessarily mean that they are relevant. Our most important challenge is to understand what disability means to the person and the family in the village, and the urban slum.

Number seven, also applicable to all development activity, is the collapse of the 'trickle-down' theory. We have assumed that, by stimulating and assisting the establishment of show-place institutions in capital cities, we would start a trickling-down process which would eventually diffuse appropriate levels of service to the smaller communities. When we have talked about national programmes, we have referred to networks of show-place centres which would trickle down. It has not happened, and we should now know that it will not happen unless there is a very hard-headed plan, based on the realities of both resources and culture to activate it....

We have made a major mistake in separating prevention and rehabilitation. The human experience is a progressive development which starts before conception, when the characteristics of the mating partners may or may not produce impairment, and terminates at death which too often is the culmination of a progressive reduction of capacities, a process which in other contexts we call disability. Everyone is faced, at the moment his potential parents meet, with the prospect of impairment; everyone is likely to suffer a diminution of capacity during his or her lifetime and whether it will be called a disability depends on the culture more than on the incapacity. Our programmes, and the programmes we have urged upon the developing countries, are not based on these realities. They are based on the idea that an impairment is a special event, and that it requires that the recipient be immediately removed from the normal stream of development and performance, and introduced to the blessings of our buildings, equipment and professional personnel.

I would like to suggest that the whole process should be a continuum of prevention, rehabilitation and social action. These are not separate crusades, they are interlocking and interacting components of a system whose only purpose is to support the optimum development of each individual's capacity and personality. Our planning, and the planning we discuss with the developing countries, should be an extension of that concept.

Opinion

Nine varieties of handicap

Johannes de Marez Oyens



Johannes de Marez Oyens studied tropical agriculture at the Agriculture University of Wageningen in the Netherlands and, after becoming physically handicapped, Spanish language and Latin American literature and history at the Universities of Amsterdam and Lima. Curator for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, since 1971. Member of ICOM's International Committee for Museums of Ethnography (ICME).

Johannes de Marez Oyens, Curator for Latin America and the Caribbean at Amsterdam's Tropenmuseum, himself disabled by polio, has sent us nine 'vignettes'. In his view, there are many people working in museums—and in countless other institutions—who have to cope with impairments of one kind or another. Some of them are perhaps just as 'disabled' as those persons whose impairments fall within the socially defined category (and problem) of 'the handicapped'.

His ninth vignette, for example, aims at a particular, not uncommon brand of handicap: blindness to other people's impairments.

Mr R is a guardian in a Museum of Natural History. For twenty years he was a forest surveyor. Being the sort of man who loves to move around outdoors, he greatly enjoyed his job. But one day he developed severe backache and, because of his back condition, had to be declared medically unfit for his work. Naturally, he is glad to have another job now. He can do it well, provided he can sit down occasionally and does not have to lift anything heavy. But every year at the beginning of spring he has a hard time. For a couple of weeks he gazes sadly through the windows of the museum and grumbles impatiently at noisy young visitors. His back still aches but he does not speak about it.

Mr L has been a porter of a Municipal Museum for twenty years. In the beginning he liked his job. 'Visitors behaved decently,' he says. They stood in awe before works of art and documents of local history, and used to walk round the museum in silence. Then 'the educational people', as he calls them, started all kinds of innovations, e.g. 'research tours', 'discussions', and 'educational exhibits'. The public changed as well and became noisy and irreverent. He is troubled because he cannot adapt to these

changes. He feels that he is expected to modify his attitude, but he doesn't know how to do this.

Mr A is a cleaner in an Open-air Museum. He is an immigrant worker. His wife and three children are still in his home country, but he does not yet have a house so that they can join him. He has some ideas as to how to improve cleaning work on the premises, but he cannot explain them because he does not speak the language. On the job, he can hardly communicate with his colleagues, also immigrant workers but from another country. He sometimes feels sad and lonely, especially on days off.

Mis I is a telephone operator at an institute which consists of two museums and a cultural centre. She was born blind. After general education at a school for the blind, she was trained to be a telephone operator at a post and telegraph department training



Mr A: he has ideas about how to improve cleaning work but cannot communicate them. [Photo: Micha de Vries, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.]

centre. Through this centre she got her present job. The equipment of the telephone exchange of the institute had to be adapted, for which a grant was received from the Ministry of Social Affairs. She wonders why her institute, which receives over 200,000 visitors a year, has no facilities or special projects for blind visitors. But saying so would mean that she would have to speak about her own handicap. And that is an idea she does not like.

Mr C is restorer in a Museum of Arts and Crafts. He is particularly known for his skill in restoring objects of wood, earthenware, lacquer and ivory. Some time ago he was suddenly faced by serious problems in his private life (a divorce, an unfortunate love affair, one of his children in gaol). He is now 52 and has taken to drinking. His hands have started to tremble, he has become extremely ill-tempered and he is afraid of those delicate jobs which were formerly a welcome challenge. His chief curator has urged him to stop drinking, but so far he has been unable to do so. In spite of his recognized professional skill, it is doubtful whether he can be maintained in his present post.

Mrs Z is keeper of the book- and gift-shop in a museum of ethnography. She suffers from migraine and frequently has to take sick-leave for two or three days. This annoys the manager, who argues that more (badly needed) money could be made out of the shop. *Mrs Z* retorts that she wished she had an arm or a leg missing, because that's something you can see and is taken seriously, whereas migraine is invisible but just as bad. Meanwhile, the accounts of the shop are falling behind.

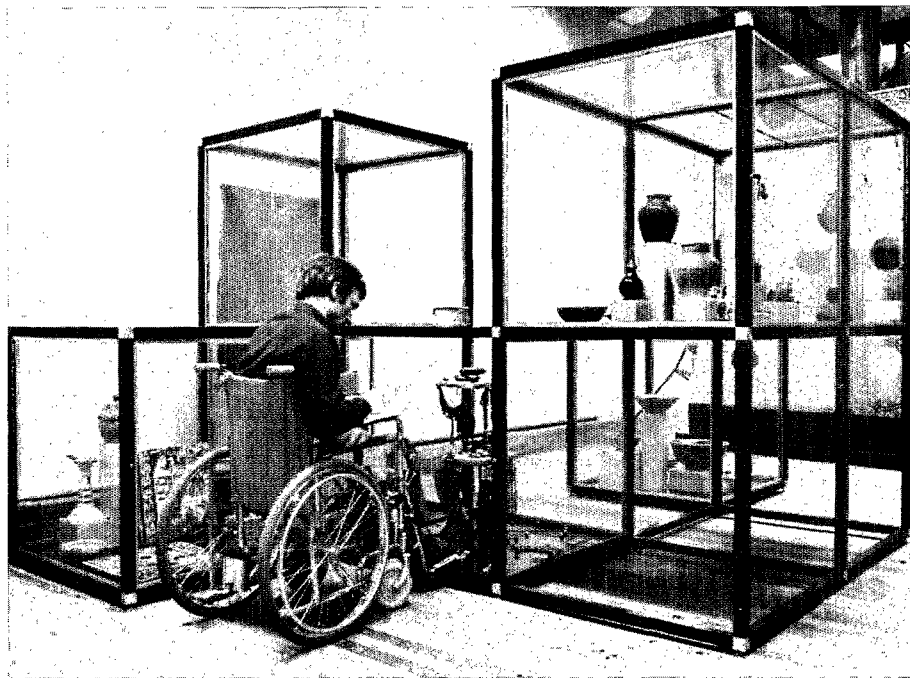
Mr P is head of the education department of a Museum of Modern Art. He virtually created this department from scratch several years ago. It now operates successfully with sections for adults, for children and for extramural activities. *Mr P* is chairman of the National Committee for Educational Work in Museums, member of the Working Group for Educational Television Programmes, member of the Arts Council of his town and editor of an international bulletin on art and education. He suffers from insomnia and heart trouble. His doctor has ordered him to give up all his secondary activities and to adopt a four-day working-week, for three months to begin with.

Mr E is an archaeologist and curator at an Archaeological Museum. After one year at the museum he was hit by a motor-car. His spine was injured and he ended up in a wheelchair. Since he had to give up field-work (excavation projects) he was allowed to turn to other tasks such as drawing up a programme for popularizing

archaeology among secondary-school pupils and revising the outdated storage system of the museum. Some relatively simple provisions were made to improve his mobility in the old building, yet several times a day he has to be carried up and down the stairs, because the museum has no lift. His presence in the museum has triggered off the preparation of a petition asking the authorities to improve the accessibility of the building and its exhibits. Tho this end a working group was formed in which *Mr E* participates as adviser.

Dr D is curator/manager of a new National Art Gallery, for which he drew up the programme of requirements. The entrance of the museum consists of a broad marble flight of stairs which gives it a most impressive look when viewed from the park in which the building is located. A revolving door gives access to the entrance hall, with its splendid marble floor, as

Mr E: his wheelchair gets him through the galleries, but what about the staircases? [Photo: Micha de Vries, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.]



smooth as a mirror. From here one marble staircase leads down to the restaurant and the toilets in the basement, and another to the main exhibition hall on the first floor. An ingenious and widely acclaimed system of intermediate floors with small exhibition rooms at different levels finally leads to the upper floor. A service lift lies at the back of the building. When asked about making it available, *Dr D* said that in order to avoid abuse, the head of the technical department is the only one who has a key to this lift. For their creation, *Dr D* and the architect of the building are expected to receive government honours shortly.

Reports

At Lons-le-Saunier (France)

*Friendship:
the most powerful force*

Michel Bourgeois Lechartier

Michel Bourgeois Lechartier was born in 1931. Studied psychology, sociology, political economy and the history of religion. Holds a Bachelor of Arts degree, as well as degrees in art and archaeology. Member of the association of French-speaking psychologists specializing in visual handicaps. Curator of museums, Jura department and of the Museum of Lons-le-Saunier. Founder of the Musée de l'Artisanat Jurassien, Baume-les-Messieurs. Has devised a method for introducing art to the blind and disabled.



N.B. Concerned above all with the dignity of his museum's young visitors and that of the monitors who work with them, Michel Bourgeois Lechartier and his colleagues (PAICA) have authorized *Museum* to publish these photographs, with the express provision that they are not to be reproduced elsewhere than in this special issue.

There is no such thing as disabled people; there are only people. If we ignore this principle, we have little chance of being accepted by those who are, by birth or by accident, different from others. It is quite evident that they understand us only in so far as our relationship with them is founded in friendship. For people who are set apart by sickness or infirmity, those whom we refer to as the disabled, suffer constantly from a sense of loneliness. Because this loneliness must be overcome, the friendship is demanding and the relationship intimate; because the contemplation together of a work of art is a form of communion between human

beings, not an act of self-sacrifice by a privileged individual on behalf of one of the disadvantaged, such encounters—often deeply meaningful, but always rare—cannot be embodied in any set of statistics.

We therefore felt that it would be interesting to describe the work that is being done at the museums of Jura in France, and in particular at Lons-le-Saunier.

The curator, together with a large number of young people, make up a team that places its emphasis on friendship rather than pedagogical research, but one in which each member is anxious to ac-

quire the best training possible. Nothing is especially organized for the disabled, rather activities, meetings and exhibitions organized for the general public are modified and adapted so that they can participate preferably along with the other visitors if the latter are willing, and they generally are.

Doing as others do

During an exhibition devoted to traditional tapestries of Lesotho, children were invited to visit the entire exhibition, and then to stop in front of the tapestry that they liked most. They were even encou-



Boy and girl monitors learn from an attitude taken up in a state of total relaxation and use it to become aware of 'states of the heart' provoked by postures of the body. After several courses and months of training, they are so well able to

harmonize their 'inner' life and their physical attitudes that their facial expressions are totally transformed. These views are taken from videotaped sessions. [Photos: Michel Bourgeois Lechartier, © PAICA.]

raged to take a seat and contemplate it at leisure, letting it permeate their minds and imaginations. Afterwards, the group reassembled, and, one after another, each told his little comrades about the tapestry he preferred.

The same procedure was followed at an exhibition of Chinese paintings.

This extremely simple exercise in oral self-expression resulted in verbal accounts which, on the part of many of the mentally handicapped, were extremely brief, but despite the poverty of their vocabulary, these children were overjoyed to be able to show that they had understood. If necessary, a member of the team recited a story or poem which shed light on these works of art from a culture so alien to our own mentalities.

Afterwards, if they wished, the children composed a work of art from the related elements. For this purpose they were given plywood cut-outs of figures traced from the tapestries. These silhouettes were laid flat on large panels and held in place by a system of magnets. Naturally, they also used felt-tip markers, chalk, paints and coloured paper. With these they drew pictures illustrating the story inspired by what they had just seen in the exhibition. But, around the silhouette of a running figure, for example, they were asked to try to imagine a décor that would make it plain that the character was either fleeing in fright, racing joyfully to meet a loved one, or dancing in the open countryside. In this way the surrounding décor lent meaning to the figure.

Sometimes this game, which at the beginning was mainly one of imitating, went on to become a more personal creation. Forgetting the tapestries, the child would call on his own imagination to illustrate a story, a song or a scene from everyday life, whose décor was inspired by his own environment.

The results varied according to the level of development of each child; however, all of them made an effort to create a picture, and to show the 'emotional' links between the different personages—even the disabled children who had done little more than trace the contours of the cut-outs with a marker.

Through their sense of touch, and an occasional helpful explanation, the blind children were able to identify cut-out characters and to compose lively scenes on the magnetized panels.

From automobiles to chess sets

An exhibition on the history of the automobile provided an opportunity to feel the relationship between volumes and shapes. The display included demonstration engines sectioned through the middle to reveal the interior workings, as well as a large number of engine parts and different types of gears that our young visitors could touch and manipulate. There were also highly accurate models of old and new cars sculpted in conglomerate, together with plywood cut-outs of the same models.

The blind children took delight in matching up the plywood silhouette to the model of each car; many of the retarded children enjoyed doing it blindfolded.

An exhibition of chess sets gave the children—and many adults as well—an opportunity to design and make shapes, and in the process to reveal a manual capability which they did not know they possessed. A lathe and a supply of wood was made available to the public, and each visitor designed and turned his own chess pieces. This was done by drawing one-half of the silhouette on a sheet of paper folded in two; cut out and unfolded, the entire shape of the piece appeared. All that remained was to turn it on the lathe.

While this was going on, other visitors, with the help and encouragement of the spectators, played a game, moving chessmen 80 centimetres high around a giant chessboard of black and white plastic tiles arranged on the floor.

Variations on the work of Sonia Delaunay

The museum held an exhibition devoted to the works of the contemporary French painter Sonia Delaunay, presenting engravings, cloth samples and models of dresses created by her. This was an opportunity for the children to try to match personalities and colours harmoniously; to create something inspired by an abstract painting; to make clothes that they themselves had designed.

Harmony. Lengths of plain cloth in a range of twelve colours were draped from ceiling to floor. Each child in turn went and stood behind it, leaving only his face and hair showing against the solid background of colour. Then his little schoolmates had to say against which colour this skin tone, eyes and smile most 'resembled' the mental image they had of his personality.

It was a difficult exercise for a great many of the children who had trouble distinguishing between the beauty of colours and that of animated human features; some children sense instinctively the harmony between a particular face and colour; many of them, overwhelmed by a bright tint, saw the human face only as part of the décor. Yet, as these disabled children sat gazing wide-eyed at a little face set off against the soft tones of the cloth, I was delighted to discover a degree of sensitivity which we seldom suspect in them.

Creation. One of the artist's non-figurative paintings was the inspiration for a puzzle made from simple geometric shapes cut out of plywood and painted in eight different colours. The children reassembled the puzzle, each according to his ability, then tried to create a gayer or sadder picture, some tone by tone, but for the most part with highly contrasting colours. Many tried to create their own composition: a clown mask, a motor-racing course, etc., or a purely abstract design. Many of these little pictures were recreated in coloured paper, cut out and pasted down so that they could be taken home by the little artist.

Clothes. In order to incite the children to design clothes 'like Sonia Delaunay' they were each given four drawings—front, profile, three-quarter view and back view—of the same boy or girl. These they were to fit out in a dress or smock of their own design that could thus be seen from all sides, so that the seamstress was able to make the outfit which the child then painted. They were often successful in this.

From one exhibition to another...

In the course of an exhibition on the theme *Children's Books from All Countries*, students, the sons and daughters of diplomats and Unesco functionaries from many countries, replied to our little visitors' questions concerning the customs, traditions and children of these lands, and showed them games and other activities common in their homelands. Thus, the children made bouquets and cut-outs with a Japanese student; they danced with the Swedish children... What a joy for the children from the Institut Médico-pédagogique when, overcoming their inhibitions, they took part in the dance together with children from other schools!

In the course of an exhibition on Africa the children created masks which, ac-

ording to them, represented symbolic characters, and thought up some quite lovely stories on the spur of the moment.

An exhibition on Gothic architecture inspired a game in which the children's bodies were the pillars of an imaginary cathedral: their outstretched arms being the ribs of the vault, etc. During this game many of them discovered how the rhythm of the thrusts compensate each other. Without doubt, it is the blind children who were most amazed to learn through their bodies the role played by an engaged pier, for example, or a rib, a flying buttress, or some other structural component of architecture.

At the *Blaquière* exhibition each child was able to build imaginary architectural forms in cardboard, some of them in-

spired by the work of the eighteenth-century architect Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.¹

It is clear that our activities are planned and implemented for the benefit of all children, and that the physically and mentally disabled have their place in them. These disabled children come to us from the Institut Médico-pédagogique in groups numbering a maximum of three; thus, like those who come individually, they can easily integrate themselves into a group of schoolchildren on an organized tour (consent is, of course, obtained beforehand from the teachers in charge of the visit). We simply take care to make things easy for them and to suggest to them only those activities they are likely to succeed in so that they should not become discouraged.

Their reactions permit us to say that our work in this field has been effective, but it is principally in our introductory approach to art for the blind that we are obtaining significant results.

An introductory approach to art for the blind

Like many others, I used to think that one needed to put an object into the hands of a blind person for his vision to be replaced by his sense of touch. But I soon realized that in most cases this does not help, for touching—like seeing—has to be learned, and society rarely makes an effort to teach it to the unsighted. The fact is, that in order to interpret his tactile sensations, the blind person must be



A blind child is taught to relax his whole body, free his mind of all thoughts and give himself up totally to the sensation provoked by his posture and to the state of feeling this creates in him.

[Photo: J. Besson, © PAICA.]

This young boy has been placed in the walking posture of a statue from Mykerinos.

[Photo: J. Besson, © PAICA.]



1. Ledoux's striking royal saltworks at Arc-et-Senans (1775-79), not far from Lons-le-Saunier, was intended to be part of a vast, idealized industrial city. The grandiose plans of his monuments reveal a marked preference for symbolic forms specific to the function of each building.—Ed.



These children are learning how to experience inner transformations brought about by changes in the position of the shoulders: slung forward, fatigue and sadness; flung backwards, strength and decisiveness.

[Photo: J. Besson, © PAICA.]

able to classify easily, quickly and in order of progression, identical shapes of different dimensions; he must know how to outline geometric forms with his hand in space, a tennis ball or a football for example; he must be able to establish a fixed point of reference for any exploration of the surrounding space and follow the proportions of the object, i.e. keeping one hand on the head of a statue, while running the other over it to discover the position of the body. Otherwise, his fingers will pass from one shape to another, and he will have to make an unimaginable mental effort to recreate the whole from the isolated elements that he perceives. He finds himself in the situation of a sighted person obliged to look at a picture that is 120 by 160 centimetres in dimension with his nose only five centimetres from it! This sighted person would discover in close-up an infinite number of details, without obtaining an overall view of the painting.

What is more, a piece of sculpture can be misleading to the touch. The folds of the drapery can take on an importance disproportionate to that of the fine relief in which the expression of the face is conveyed; since marble, bronze and wood cannot be compressed by the hand, the hair often doubles the size of the head; the drape of a robe makes it impossible to perceive the position of the legs. Not to mention how difficult it is for the fingers to sense the difference between a forehead creased by thought, and one that is wrinkled with age; between the play of the facial muscles in expressing the laughter of a child, and that provoked by the suffering of a tortured man.

A blind child must be content with the interpretation given by his guide, and attempt to confirm it by touch.

After more than twenty years' research we can offer the unsighted a method which by their own accounts teaches them infinitely more than they already know. Although I have had to keep the two following examples simple they will give some idea of this method.

Sculpture and the blind. In order to convey the impression given by one of the characters in Rodin's group *The Burgbers of Calais*, a traditional guide would mention his heavy step, his drooping head and arms, and the feeling of sadness, fatigue and discouragement emanating from him. The unsighted child would then try to verify this impression through the sense of touch.

We have replaced this method with another more elaborate approach by

which the child can discover the pose of the character and the psychological state that it reflects. Beforehand, he will have learned to relax as completely as possible, and the guide will have completed a special training course.²

The blind child stands with his muscles totally relaxed and the guide manipulates him like a puppet, 'gently... like a wounded bird', arranging his body in precisely the same pose as that of the statue. The child remains motionless until his body conveys to him the psychological state of the character being imitated. We are all aware of the influence of

A child discovers a guide in a position he has already learned—basket on the head. The child will now touch the bearer of offerings on an Egyptian bas-relief and be able to recognize her posture. [Photo: J. Besson, © PAICA.]



posture on the mind. With our head held high and our shoulders thrown back, we breath deeply and have a general impression of renewed vigour; on the other hand, when our shoulders and arms sag, the rib cage is compressed and we eventually begin to feel uncomfortable and tired. After a moment's silence, the child is encouraged to describe little by little just what he is feeling. Generally, he begins by giving his physical sensations: 'I feel tired... I have a weight on my shoulders...' Then come the feelings arising from his physical malaise which are based on individual experience, for example: 'This is not a physical fatigue... It is psychological... Like a great sorrow... I feel that I should walk, but I don't want to, I don't want to... I feel like running away... It's as though I were ashamed...'

The pose of the character created by Rodin is so lifelike, that by living it with his own body, the unsighted child ex-

periences the feelings that inspired it just as deeply, and possibly with more accuracy, than anything a sighted person can perceive with his eyes.

The second stage teaches the blind to situate their bodies in a spatial context. We must not forget, that whether a person is blind or not, if he is in good health, he is not aware of his body. Each part, be it an organ or a limb, only makes its existence known through the sensation of pain. We remember that we have feet only when they are frostbitten or when we stub a toe. Therefore, the guide, in turn, takes the pose and the unsighted child discovers through his sense of

2. A complex method is used for purposes of relaxation. It is part of an overall introductory approach to art for the blind and disabled which includes correspondence courses, audio-visual courses, workshops, the loan of reproductions for the disabled and montages for the blind, and travelling exhibitions. Workshops for guides are held on a regular basis.



The child's hand on the falcon's head is a point of reference; the other hand explores the sculpture's volume.

[Photo: J. Besson, © PAICA.]

He now discovers in low relief the object he has already touched in the round.

[Photo: J. Besson, © PAICA.]

touch, the place that the various parts of his body occupied in space, and their positions relative to one another. It is only then, after he already has an intimate knowledge of it, that he makes a tactile exploration of the sculpture; the guide will have little to explain other than such details as the fold of the clothes. With practice, the second stage—that in which the guide mimes the statue—becomes progressively less necessary, as the blind child forms the habit of being aware of his body in its spatial context.

Obviously, such an approach demands perfect mental and emotional stability on the part of the guide, for this reason, we generally train parents, brothers or sisters for the role.

Painting and the blind. To demonstrate the approach to painting we will take as our example the *Visit of the Magi* by Gentile da Fabriano (Uffizi Gallery, Florence).

Here it is a question of making the painting comprehensive to a class of fifteen blind students, accompanied by as many volunteer monitors. Sitting around the walls of the room, the children first listen to the story from the Gospel told in a fashion likely to set their imaginations to work. Then a tableau vivant is composed in front of them.

The games master asks for a girl monitor to play the part of the Virgin. She sits in exactly the pose that Mary has in the painting and reads aloud from a note: 'I am the Virgin: I am seated and my baby is on my lap.' Next a boy monitor takes his place and reads: 'I am St Joseph; I am standing behind the Virgin leaning on my staff.' One by one the volunteers come into the picture and adopt the pose of the character they are portraying in the painting, including two young people who play the roles of the ox and the ass and, instead of reading from notes, indicate what they are and what they are do-

ing by braying and mooing—to the great amusement of the children.

By situating themselves vocally in this way, the actors make it possible for our little visitors to pinpoint them in the spatial context and, according to the height from which the sound is coming, to say whether they are standing, sitting or kneeling.

When the scene is complete, the announcements are repeated, once from right to left and once from left to right, the exact spot where each character is standing is marked on the floor and the monitors stand aside. The scenario begins again, but this time it is played out by the blind children. The child has to go from his chair to the spot that his character occupied, take the required pose and announce who he is and what he is doing. As is to be expected, none of them manage it the first time. They have to be moved to the correct spot so that they can measure the error in distance they have made, if necessary they are led back to their chair so that they can try again as often as they need to. In this way, the game of learning about art contributes to their re-education. Once the painting has been recreated, the blind children repeat their announcements, this time so that they can hear one another and gain a sense of being inside the picture, and the games master again tells the story they are portraying.

Friendship

The two examples given above show only a few aspects of the blind child's encounter with a work of art. They give a faint idea of the dynamism and humour that the monitors put into a job undertaken without payment but with such passion and amiability that the disabled await anxiously discoveries that they consider both rewarding and agreeable.

Friendship. This is without doubt the key word.

Without friendship, our role would limit itself to the application of an approach to art, our goal to aesthetic appreciation, and our work would be singularly incomplete. Without it, would art reveal itself to be the specially apt means that it is for developing the personality of these children?

Without friendship, the relationship of the individual to the group which makes for interesting statistics would doubtless be established, but the bonds which link one human being to another would not.

On the other hand, friendship creates the trust and the surprising degree of loyalty that exists between people whose relationship is that of equal to equal, despite the fact that one of them happens to be disabled.

The expression of this trust is sometimes quite moving.

'It's odd,' said one child, blind from birth, to a monitor, 'with you I feel warm. Before, I always felt cold.'

Another, whom one of us advised to follow the instructions of his training specialist, gave this heart-rending answer: 'I'm asking you because you're my friend. Him, he's paid to pretend he is, but at six o'clock I don't count any more.'

There was also the little girl born with only one arm who trembled with fright at the thought of meeting our monitors—boys and girls of her own age, obviously 'normal'—who would, as usual, stare at her as though she were a strange animal. When the time came, the person in charge introduced her thus: 'This is X who was silly enough to leave one of her arms inside her mummy's womb...' Everyone burst out laughing, and she along with them. These are words that one can only accept from a friend, a true friend.

[Translated from French]

Riches of the psyche

Fernanda de Camargo-Moro

Fernanda de Camargo-Moro was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. B.A. in museology, M.A. and Ph.D. in archaeology. Associate professor of anthropology, Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Assistant Professor and then Chairman of Department of Archaeology—Faculty of Museology, Rio de Janeiro. President of Rio de Janeiro Museums Foundation. Now Director-General of Museums, State of Rio de Janeiro; President of the Council for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of the City of Rio de Janeiro; President of the Brazilian National Committee of ICOM. Author of several books and essays on museology, archaeology and preservation of the environment. Member of the Executive Council of ICOM, since 1980. Member of the Council of the Museum of Images of the Unconscious and general supervisor of its museology programme.

*'We healthy people, who stand with both feet in reality, see only the ruin of the patient in this world, but not the richness of that side of the psyche which is turned away from us. Unfortunately, only too often no further knowledge reaches us of the things that are played out on the dark side of the soul, because all the bridges have broken down which connect that side with this.'*¹

Five years later...

Since the article 'Museum of Images of the Unconscious, Rio de Janeiro: an Experience Lived within a Psychiatric Hospital' appeared in 1976² I have often been asked how this museum was developed. Has it changed? In what ways has it progressed?

It is now housed in a special new building within the National Psychiatric Centre. At the request of the Society of the Friends of the Museum and with the help of the Centre of Studies and Projects of the Planning Secretariat attached to the President's Office the museum has been fitted out with new equipment and display facilities. It has also received the technical support of the Brazilian National Committee of ICOM. The collection has been restored by two of the country's most competent restorers who have installed a paper and paintings conservation laboratory in which specialized personnel can also be trained. Study areas, offices, permanent and temporary exhibition rooms, and modern storage areas with effective climate control, have also been created. Since 1976 several temporary exhibitions have been organized in other institutions. A successful book was published about the museum by the National Foundation of the Arts. The museum has now attained true maturity. It has become one of the most important centres of interdisciplinary studies in Brazil.

Barriers and constraints

Despite this, many people have remained reluctant to visit the museum, panic-stricken at even having to speak about it. Mental disease is still taboo in our society and arouses reactions of fear. I have often had to force people to come and see the

wonderful work of the 'patients' living in the National Psychiatric Centre, those who work or had worked to create the museum's collection.

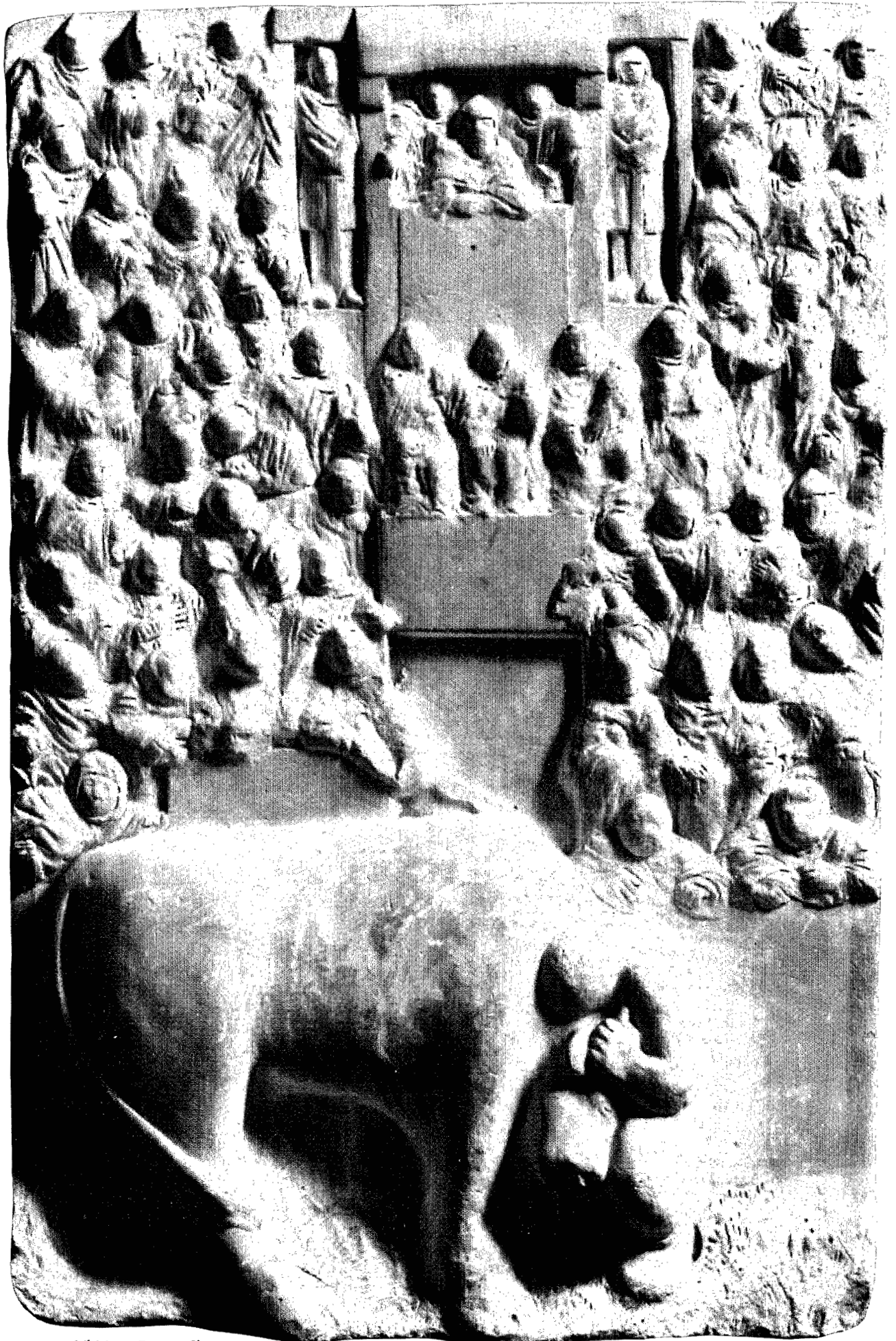
But presenting Jung's 'dark side of the soul' is not without its special constraints. Our museology has had to forge new rules, adapted to the nature of the collection and its creators, and address itself to serious ethical and psychological problems. Often, for example, details about and photographs of the artists, which would bring precious information to the visitor, cannot be provided on account of the harm that it could cause. Artists can at most be identified; no mention can be made of their past. Nor is it possible to refer openly to the ways in which they react to the work of other artists or to other objects and events, for any suggestion that they are a 'curiosity' would be sure to offend them and cut off the flow of their creative inspiration. Excessive praise (or frank criticism) must be avoided as well.

Continuous evolution

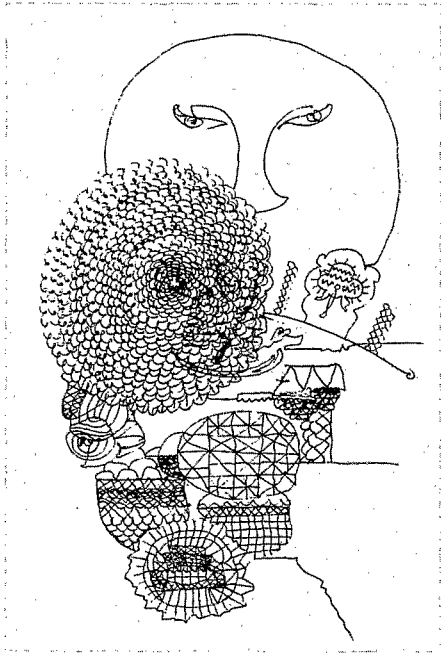
'The museum has never stopped,' says its founder Dr Nise da Silveira. 'Even while the monitors were bringing the collection to the new building, the participating patients from the workshops came right over, bringing their tools and materials [brushes, inks, etc.] so as to get back to work as rapidly as possible.' The collection was thus reinstalled at the same time as the workshops. Parallel activities began automatically, with no problems of adaptation. Even the reopening of the museum was a mere formality, because continuity was sustained by everybody. The old museum has evolved into the new. The community of the Engenho de Dentro (which is the name of the locality), as we call the group, whether they are the creative patients, or simply psychologists, or the museum workers themselves, have worked together with great

1. C. G. Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. III, *The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease*, para 385, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960 (translated by R. F. C. Hull).

2. *Museum*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, 1976, p. 35.



In the permanent exhibition, *Roman Circus*,
cast made by one of the patients.
[Photo: Umberto Franceschi.]



MUSEU DE IMAGENS DO INCONSCIENTE, Rio de Janeiro. Drawings by Raphael, one of the most gifted artists.
[Photos: Museum of the Images of the Unconscious.]

energy and conviction and in a totally integrated fashion.

Housed in the front section of the hospital since 1977, the growing collection has required more space and better installations: workshops for painting and drawing; one workshop inside for modelling and another, outside, for wood engraving; two supporting workshops for restoration of books and handicrafts (embroidery, doll-making, etc.); a meeting room with a piano, an organ, and several games.

An atmosphere of creativity pervades the whole museum today. A piano has been bought for the meeting room and is regularly played. The first time somebody came to play it, Fernando Diniz, one of the most creative patients, immediately painted the scene. Adelina, another creative patient, painted the first flowers that announced the spring—yellow acacias. She is the first to sense the coming of spring and transmit her premonition through her extra sensibility and powerful use of colour.

In the exhibition area, the museum's study group (an interdisciplinary team of psychiatrists, museologists, anthropologists, etc. who look at the behaviour and work of the museum community) has prepared a double exhibition showing the 'ruin' and 'richness' of mental disease, the negative and positive poles. On the first floor, the exhibition *The Misery of the Psychiatric Hospital Seen by its Inhabitants* graphically presents a tragic reality: solitude accompanied by a total lack of privacy, with no horizons and no exits. Besides paintings and drawings there are texts by the patients themselves. One

says: 'Here in the hospital there are no novelties, it's as if there exist only stones. The stones only feel changes when the weather changes, when it is very hot, when there is wind or rain...' (E.M., 2 July 1976). Texts by Jung are also used here, as on the second floor, where the second part of the exhibition presents texts by Freud as well. This section is called 'Sources of the Fantastic'. Paintings and drawings show the metamorphoses of people as seen by the artists: animals and flowers, fantastic beings, anthropomorphic landscapes—the wonder and beauty of the 'riches' of the psyche.

Very early one sunny morning last summer, I arrived at the new building. It was humming with activity. Patients were painting and modelling in the garden. The workshops inside were full of people. A powerful mood of enthusiasm pervaded the scene, accompanied harmoniously by the piano in the meeting room.

New directions

This heart-warming experience of growth has opened our eyes. It has also paved the way for integrating several categories of disabled persons in the work of other museums in the State of Rio de Janeiro. The museums organization here (SMU-FUNARJ), with the help of the Brazilian National Committee of ICOM, has begun to involve not only people with mental problems, but the blind, the deaf and the paraplegic in activities such as museological drawing, research and conservation. Earlier, these people had at best been treated as 'special visitors'.

The museum must become a cultural environment for all and extend its limits in every direction. In the present case, however, the programme of integration must be developed slowly. There are many material problems to be faced: obstacles to access in old buildings, newly built museums whose various facilities (lifts, etc.) exist only in the galleries and reception areas. Ethics are also a constant concern, as we have seen already. One of the most serious challenges is to find people to help during the initial period of adaptation. For this stage we have been using the services of an 'invisible supervisor', a museum worker who guides the individual participant with the utmost discretion, establishing an imperceptible link with him, helping him indirectly to overcome difficulties born of ignorance of his problems on the part of other staff members. We have tried to avoid all suggestions of a 'paternalistic' attitude. We try never to let the disabled person feel that he is being treated differently from the others.

The paradox of our success, its obvious ransom, is the fact that we cannot cite concrete—and therefore identifiable—examples. The direct consequences on all these fine and gifted people would be disastrous, for they would immediately feel that they are treated as 'objects'. Their creativity would come to a halt. These consequences would affect all the people working together in the museum as a homogeneous group: creative, sensitive and highly responsible.

Special educational programmes at the National Zoological Park, Santo Domingo

Jaime A. Viñas Román

Jaime Viñas Román was the founding director of ZOODOM and occupied this post until early 1981. He is now Rector of the Universidad Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Santo Domingo.

Introduction

Since its inception in 1975, the Parque Zoológico Nacional (ZOODOM) at Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic, has worked for better teaching of the natural sciences. It has created educational programmes for children of all ages and levels of education. Having also recognized the need to help disabled children, it began in 1978/79 a series of courses specially conceived for their benefit.¹

With respect to the education of disabled children, the zoo's role must be one of receptiveness, kindness and guidance. Whatever its origin, a disability does not generally affect the learning ability of the child. But the teacher at the zoo must adapt his techniques considerably if he is to attain fully his teaching objectives. In the case of ZOODOM, we also aim to show, through appropriate zoological activities, that the majority of handicapped children can live in and contribute to society just like all the others. Educational programmes should give handicapped children a series of creative experiences, and transmit to them the skills that can help them learn effectively about zoology.

If the handicapped child is intellectually gifted, he or she will learn rapidly from each lecture and show dexterity in manual skills. The child does not function with theoretical concepts, for he is a practical being, with his own will. Hence ZOODOM puts all its efforts into tapping the potential of each child. The courses fit within a special plan and they are based on a most important underlying objective, which is the conservation of the natural resources of the country by means of the educational campaign which has been carried out since the opening of the zoo.

The personnel of the Education De-

partment are in charge of these courses. They examine the children's needs, the requirements of society and the different methods used by special primary schools in the country. In each classroom at ZOODOM, it is the teachers and children together who work out what they are going to do, how, and why, even though the final decision belongs to the educational staff. The aims of the zoological educational courses for handicapped children can be summed up as follows: To strengthen the knowledge acquired in previous zoology courses in special schools.

To explain through clear and simple demonstrations the importance to man of wild and domesticated animals.

To explain, with the help of descriptions and illustrations, the differences between animals native to the Dominican Republic and other animals housed at the Parque Zoológico Nacional.

To explain the importance of conservation of natural resources throughout the world and specially in our country.

To show through zoological activities that the majority of handicapped children can live and develop their abilities just like any other children and be just as useful to their country.

To develop special ties of friendship between children and teachers.

To establish close co-ordination with the specialized institutions for handicapped children.

Our methodology

When planning a course we tried to find a place where the children would be outside the public flow of visitors, and at the same time within reach of the educational resources. There was no better location than the children's zoo, which has a kiosk with two large tables and twenty chairs.

What type of methodology would achieve the proposed objectives for the four groups of handicapped children that

we had defined? We had already used in the classroom, with good results, methods of observation using all the senses and the inductive method of going from particulars to the general, although sometimes, as a final phase, we went from the inductive method to the deductive method of teaching.

One month before the course began direct communication was established between the special schools and ZOODOM. In order to learn the methodology, the ZOODOM teachers visited the special schools. The methods learned include Braille. On the day the courses began, the children were met by the teachers who introduced themselves informally, avoiding the use of formal titles, and explained to the children the kind welcome they would receive at the zoo. After refreshments, the children were taken to the tour train. Each subsequent day a different person took them on the tour so that they could see and hear different things about the zoo and the animals. This change of guides also helped them become acquainted with the different people working at ZOODOM. When the first tour was over, the children were taken to the children's zoo where they began their first lessons.

The topics that we covered successfully included the general characteristics of mammals, birds and reptiles; the skin characteristics of the animals and, finally, animal nutrition. The children always worked with live animals: lion- and tiger-cubs, sheep, horses, rabbits, llamas, tortoises, baby crocodiles, and many different birds. If some of them showed fear, the teacher reassured them, using the example of other children: 'Andrew touched the animal and nothing happened.' 'Do you think I'd show you an animal that would hurt you?' After classroom sessions the children were taken to

1. This article is based on a report on specialized educational programmes at the Parque Zoológico Nacional in 1978/79.

Blind girl examining a bird.
[Photo: ZOODOM.]



Deaf-mute child observing a crocodile replica.
[Photo: ZOODOM.]



PARQUE ZOOLOGICO NACIONAL, Santo Domingo. Deaf-mute children in a relaxed classroom session.
[Photo: ZOODOM.]



Touch reveals the strange forms of the turtle.
[Photo: ZOODOM.]



the zones where the different animals live. When they studied nutrition they were taken to the zoo kitchen where they touched, saw, smelled and even ate the food that was fed to the animals. In these tours the children were also given individualized demonstrations.

Another common activity was making animals with play dough. The blind children, for example, made snakes, four legged animals or turtles. The deaf-mute, retarded, and invalid children enjoyed drawing the animals that they had seen. When they went round the zoo the teachers offered them drawing materials and were always ready to help the children in observing the animals. For example, if a retarded child drew a turtle with nine legs, the teacher explained to

him his error. At the same time the children were encouraged to continue with further drawings.

Special activities offered

The zoological courses were offered for various categories of handicapped children: mentally retarded; physically handicapped; partially or totally blind and those with impaired speech or hearing.

Mentally retarded children. Since some children are more retarded than others, it was necessary to subdivide the group so that the former could be more carefully supervised, depending on their specific needs. Although it is unrealistic to expect the majority of these children to perform

perfectly in their discipline of study or to understand partially or wholly abstract ideas, they can develop certain skills in zoology. The most important part of ZOODOM's work was to teach them to satisfy their immediate cognitive needs. We had to help them adapt to the school and familiarize them with the idea of conservation of natural resources, especially fauna.

Physically handicapped. There were no special activities for these children since their only disability is physical. The most important function of the teacher is to show them that they are still important to society and should not allow their defects to stigmatize them. This was done by means of conversation, anecdotes, and

activities directed by the teacher. At ZOODOM these children helped with our educational campaign, passing on the ecological message against litter to all the children who visited the zoo.

Blind children. The blind child is the easiest to manage, for his only disability is his inability to see. These children think normally, and they learn more easily than those in the other groups. They took all the classes and did all the activities mentioned above except drawing. They were first of all familiarized with the children's zoo and with the teacher's voice. The most important factor should be the area where the class is to be taught, since the child becomes more easily acquainted with this area than any other. When calling on the children from that point, the teacher watched their movements so as to guide them by saying, for example, 'More to the right, a little to the left', until the child had quickly learned where the path was. The children were then asked to mount horses so that they could understand how animals aid man in transportation. The children were lifted on to the horses' backs by a tall person, one of the zoo-keepers, for example, so that they could get an idea of the height of the animals. As a child was being lifted, the teacher might ask: 'Do you understand that not even from there could you touch a giraffe's or elephant's head?' Of course the children could touch a part of an animal's body, and get an idea of its full size.

Blind children participated in all the active games along with the rest. In this way they realized that they could socialize with all the other children who visit the zoo. The latter are usually protective of the blind children, but the zoo teacher intervenes so that the sighted children treat the blind children as equals without pitying them, but certainly showing them extra consideration. In this way the blind children are 'orientated' and helped to realize that they too can function effectively and usefully in society.

Deaf-mute children. These children require much dedication on the part of the zoo teacher since their basic means of learning is the movement of the teacher's lips and the information on the blackboard. The teacher writes all the necessary information on the blackboard, a secondary need in other cases, but indispensable for the deaf-mute child.

Films were shown on animal behaviour: feeding habits, conservation, etc. The teacher wrote on the board what the

deaf-mute children would like to learn. A special demonstration was given for the children and the blackboard used to reinforce the explanations. These children did all the activities already mentioned, including, more specifically, drawings and paintings, cut-outs of felt, etc.

Future activities at ZOODOM for handicapped children

We wish to double the number of courses offered. It is planned also to train one teacher from each special school. We also will be training a blind teacher working with blind children so that he can return with them any day on a special excursion and guide them throughout the zoo. Apart from this, the blind teacher could teach the children better than a sighted colleague, as when he feels something he will probably do so in a similar fashion to the child.

We plan to start a programme called 'Living with your Zoo'. The children who have participated in the four initial courses will take part in this special programme, designed as an occasion to mix, play and enjoy themselves with other children for a whole day at the zoo.

Some suggestions for zoo teachers

Our experience permits us to make the following suggestions, which would apply to other zoo activities with handicapped children and perhaps also to educational work in museums in general:

The special schools for handicapped should be visited by the zoo teacher before the zoo class begins.

Blind children should not be pitied and personal comments should not be made in front of them.

Retarded children should be watched extra carefully at lunch-time and recess, because some of them have difficulty in feeding themselves and others fight with their classmates. These children are the most mischievous and need the most attention.

The special-school teacher should not be present in the zoo classroom; in that way the children will not be inhibited in their actions, or in putting questions, etc. The teacher of retarded children may visit the zoo with them but should not stay in the classroom. He should only be present during lunch-time and recess.

When the children are given their food, it should be brought ten minutes be-

fore lunch-time so that they will not be kept waiting. All the zoo teachers help serve every student and sit and eat with them. The children are left free to socialize with each other, and the teacher should interfere only when there is disorder.

The materials being used should be distributed and collected by only one person, in that way order can be maintained.

After each class a fifteen-minute recess should be given and some refreshments served so that when children return to class they will be rested and content.

During the two-hour lunch and recess period the zoo teacher should organize games and activities, and take part in them. The child will see that the zoo teacher is not only a teacher, but also a friend who will help him learn and develop.

All the zoo teachers should be present and taking part, but there should be one main teacher who co-ordinates and presents the participating teachers to the class. The co-ordinating teacher should always be with the children. It is not necessary that the same teacher always co-ordinate the same group, but a system of rotation should be adopted so that all the teachers will be able to co-ordinate any of the four groups.

At the end of the course there should be a formal occasion at which the children receive certificates from the director of the zoo. All of the personnel of the zoo should be present to enhance the event. There should be some kind of play produced by the co-ordinating teacher and performed by the children. One of the students should give a word of appreciation to the zoo staff on behalf of his classmates; this will give the children a feeling of importance.

The zoo should give the children souvenirs to take home. The souvenirs, along with the refreshments served at the programme should be a surprise for the children.

A new source of hope: a scheme for mentally handicapped children in Tunisia

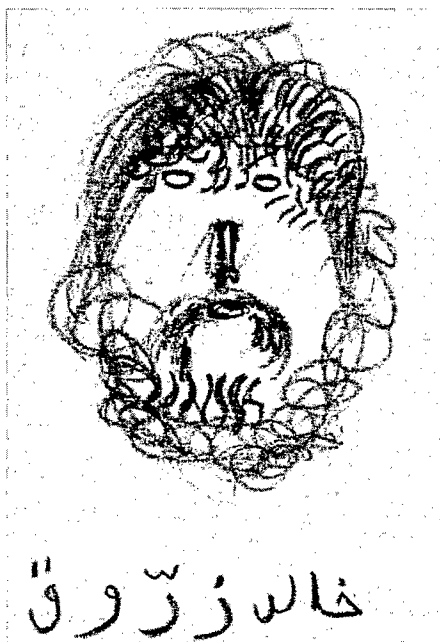
Nayla Ouertani

Nayla Ouertani studied the history of art and archaeology at the University of Paris-IV, Sorbonne. She is curator of the National Museum of the Bardo, and Chairman of the Tunisian National Committee of ICOM. Her publications include: *La femme tunisienne: parures et activités à travers les siècles* (The Tunisian Woman: Costumes and Activities through the Centuries); 'Les statues de Bulla-Régia au Musée National du Bardo' (The Statues of Bulla-Regia in the National Museum of the Bardo) in *Ruines de Bulla-Régia*, by A. Beschaouch, Y. Thebert and R. Hanoune; an exhibition catalogue; and *Carthage*.

In the context of the International Year for Disabled Persons, the Tunisian National Committee of ICOM has designed a scheme which uses museum facilities to help mentally handicapped children.¹ Its purpose is to help integrate this least privileged group of children into the community at large, and thereby to overcome the prejudices they suffer.

Knowing that in the mentally handicapped child the range of impaired functions includes the separation of self from external objects, awareness of identity and physical integrity, lateralization and everything relating to the ordering of space and time, we chose as our topic 'The Statue and the Child'. A contributory factor was that our museum houses a large number of statues from excavations at Thuburbo-Majus, Bulla Regia and Carthage, which offer a unique potential for helping to stimulate recognition of life, movement, the senses and other human characteristics through contrast with an inanimate object, and for learning more about the structure of the body.

Realizing the need for thorough preparation, our committee enlisted the services of a specialist teacher, Georges Galand,² with whose support we submitted our programme to the Tunisian Society for the Mentally Handicapped (UTAIM).³ In order to familiarize ourselves with this section of the public, we had previously visited UTAIM and come to know the children. We had also realized the importance of winning over the staff. The first experiment was held at the National Museum of the Bardo⁴ on



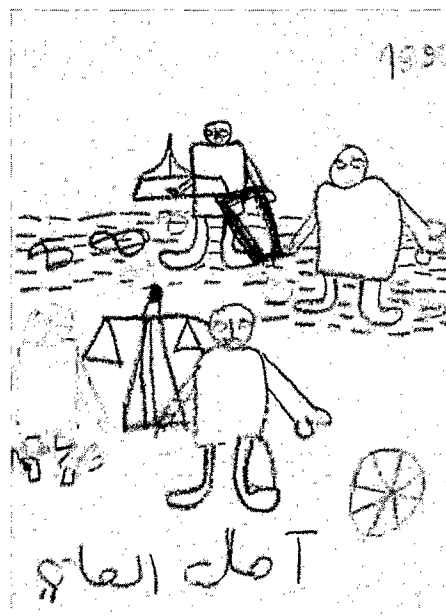
13 March 1981, with a group of nine children aged from 14 to 18, whose mental ages ranged from 3 to 7.

Our method

The group included children with widely differing degrees of disability and from various social backgrounds, two of whom had the additional disadvantage of a speech defect.

We welcomed them, together with their teachers, in the Sousse Hall, a large room which contains the feet of the Jupiter of Thuburbo-Majus, a giant statue some seven metres tall. We grouped the children round the feet. They were also asked to touch them with their hands, so using both vision and touch. At first they displayed a degree of reticence due to the strangeness of the place and objects, and only gradually did their inhibitions weaken, enabling them to touch the feet freely.

We asked them a number of questions designed to help them identify the object, distinguish it from their own bodies, and grasp the concept of artistic representation and the nature of life. In view of the



Children's drawings.

children's intellectual level, we had to ask a great many questions and perform a number of experiments. The latter included taking shoes off, making a child lie down alongside the foot to measure its length, and pricking a teacher's finger to

1. The following were associated with this project: N. Ouertani, W. Souissi, L. Ben Fredj and A. Kraïri, all members of the Tunisian National Committee of ICOM; G. Galand, a specialist teacher and Adviser for Social Development at the Ministry for Social Affairs; Madame Ouær, Director of the Tahar Hadad Centre; and A. Lahmar, a UTAIM specialist in audio-visual techniques.

2. Georges Galand is a specialist teacher working in institutions for mentally disordered or handicapped children and adolescents. He specialized in family therapy (Liège, 1977-80), working through the juvenile courts. He has written articles on teaching and the need for institutional reform for the journals of the Confédération Nationale des Employés (trade union). A member of the Alternative Psychiatry Network, he has since 1981 worked as Adviser for Social Development at the Ministry for Social Affairs, Tunis.

3. The Union Tunisienne d'Aide aux Insuffisants Mentaux, UTAIM, is an association of parents of mentally handicapped children which operates some twenty specialist education centres.

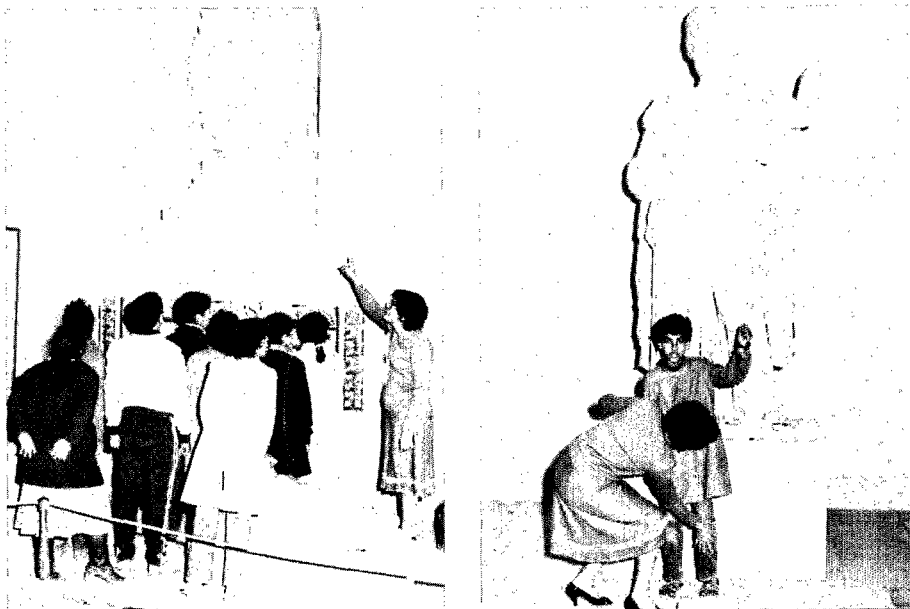
4. The national archaeological museum, famous for its collection of mosaics.

Identifying the head.

[Photo: Musée National du Bardo.]

Child pretending to be the statue.

[Photo: Musée National du Bardo.]



MUSÉE NATIONAL DU BARDO, TUNIS.

Identifying Jupiter's foot.

[Photo: Musée National du Bardo.]



make it bleed. The questions were as follows:

What is it? Is it a real foot? Is it a person's foot? Are there people with such big feet? Has anybody lost his foot here? Is it the same as our feet? Is it the same colour as ours? Is it colder than ours? If I prick it with a pin, will it be hurt, will it bleed? If I prick the teacher, is he hurt? Why does he bleed? If you walk on the statue's toes, does it pull them away? Can it walk? Is it the right foot or the left?

Other questions were used to introduce the elements of time, authorship and material in relation to the statue and to bring out the role of the museum: When was the foot made? What is it made of? Who made it? These concepts of time order were only partially absorbed. For instance, one child said the statue had been made in summer because it had sandals on its feet, whilst another replied that it had been made in winter because it was cold. But none of them gained the slightest notion of the museum's role.

Once they had firmly grasped the differences between the statue's foot and their own, we moved on to its head. Here

the process was far quicker than with the foot, but we noted that the children were slow to see the head as a lifeless object. More especially, they found it hard to realize that its eyes could not see. However, they managed to understand that these were not living persons, but images made because at the time there were no cameras, television or cinema.

Finally, to check whether the children had understood the structure of the body, we took them to the far end of the hall where there are two damaged suits of armour and a broken statue of a woman. The armour caused a number of difficulties, because the children were unused to it and could not relate it to any form of

clothing that they knew. We therefore started with the navel, the most easily recognizable part of the armoured body and—not without some difficulty at first—we made them pick out the different parts. We then felt that, since the children were able to reconstitute the human body starting from the trunk, its structure had been satisfactorily studied. In this exercise we used several factors such as accident, environment or toys.

The game of body posture

The last phase of the scheme consisted of taking the children to 'play statues' in the Bulla Regia Hall, which houses most of

the better-preserved statues discovered in the Temple of Apollo in that city. The children were asked to imitate the postures of the statues. Here we observed a high incidence of impaired lateralization, and many postures had to be corrected. The children showed keen interest in this game, particularly as they were posing for the camera. From still-miming, we moved on to mime in motion. Taking as a model a scene depicting the nine Muses sculpted in alto rilievo on a sarcophagus, the children made up a round-dance. During this final phase, we emphasized that no matter how closely they might resemble a statue in their postures, as human beings the children were radically different from it. This was done to underline the distinction between humans and the inanimate world.

The children then expressed the wish to copy what they had seen. We realized with some astonishment that their interest had been sustained for two whole hours instead of the scheduled forty-five minutes. Throughout their visit the children had shown great pleasure and high spirits. We observed that only six of the nine had fully joined in the activities, the other three seeming wholly uninterested, although they did not disturb the group.

This scheme opened our eyes to the many opportunities that the museum offers, through the many stimuli it provides, for developmental activities with psychically disturbed children: its riches are an inexhaustible source of specialized education. We also concluded that mentally handicapped children could become regular visitors to places hitherto thought

suitable only for normal children, and that they could take part in activities that were formerly considered the prerogative of developed intellects. Specialized institutions for such children should see the museum as an asset which opens up new prospects for their work.

[Translated from French]

Special programmes for blind children at the National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi

S. M. Nair

S. M. Nair. M.Sc. (zoology); Ph.D. (museology). Lecturer in museology, University of Baroda; Head, Department of Museum Studies, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani. At present, Head of the National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi. Has published over thirty publications on zoology, museology and biodeterioration.

One of the first areas of special concern to the National Museum of Natural History in New Delhi, India, soon after its inauguration in June 1978, was to develop programmes for the benefit of blind children. This concern closely reflects the policies of the Government of India to provide special opportunities for the well-being of physically handicapped people. Within six months of the opening of the museum a monthly programme called 'Touch, Feel and Learn' was instituted as a permanent feature. Children from the five schools for the blind in Delhi now take advantage of this activity on a regular basis. Other occasional programmes for blind children include creative activity in the form of animal modelling.

The 'Touch, Feel and Learn' programme

This programmed exposure to tactile learning for the blind is conducted once every month. It is a two-hour programme, limited normally to between twenty and thirty children, who receive individualized attention. It consists of both a gallery programme and a discovery activity.

Gallery programme. The museum galleries, though not specifically designed to suit the needs of blind children, have several touch exhibits and audio aids which can be used for their benefit. Areas are earmarked for the provision of tactile and auditory experiences. They include a unit that deals with the origin of the earth and the evolution of life, dramatically presented with synchronized commentary. The blind can benefit only from the commentary, however. This section leads to the next unit, which deals with the clues

to evolution and contains the maximum number of exhibits useful to blind children. A huge fossil-bearing rockery is reconstructed from fibreglass; inset fossils show how and where fossils occur in nature. The six-metre-long rockery can be probed by blind children, providing a tactile experience which gives them an idea of fossils and the rocks that contain them. A huge ammonite fossil is provided separately as a touch exhibit. The educational staff of the museum make special efforts to explain the exhibits and make children touch, feel and understand the importance of fossils as clues to evolution.

The rest of the galleries have exhibits mostly behind glass and are not suitable for blind children. This shortcoming is overcome by the second part of the programme conducted in the Discovery Room.

The discovery activity. The Discovery Room of the museum is an activity area with a large number of facilities such as 'discovery boxes' containing objects and specimens to be handled and examined, live-animal corners, creative activity areas, etc., for children in general. When a programme for the blind is conducted, special facilities are provided. The blind children find the 'discovery boxes' most useful. Through handling the specimens and objects contained in them they learn about various types of invertebrate animals such as molluscs, echinoderms, sponges, corals, etc., plants and plant products, as well as biological phenomena such as adaptations

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, New Delhi. 'Touch, Feel and Learn' programme for blind children: learning about animals. [Photo: National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi.]



of animals, forms and shapes of fishes, reptiles, birds, etc. Apart from these, specimens and exhibits from the museum's reserve collections are brought out. The children can thus examine a crocodile, a tiger, a deer, a pelican, a common bird, or distinguish between skins of animals and so on. Braille scripts, embossed charts and pictures as well as a variety of models are used during the exposure session for blind children in the Discovery Room. The rabbits in the live corner are taken out for the children to handle and play with. They enjoy this unusual experience which proves a thrill and satisfies their curiosity.

Since these children require individualized attention, the ratio of museum educators and children is never allowed to fall below one to two. This is easily achieved because the entire technical staff of the museum, including the curators and the head, assist the seven-member educational staff to make the programme for the blind a useful and successful one. This association of the museum staff with the programme for the blind children comes about almost voluntarily, for the former derive a unique sense of satisfaction from interacting with their young visitors and being able to contribute to their happiness. It is equally thrilling for them to see their amazing and remarkable facility in identifying and understanding specimens and grasping biological factors and phenomena through senses other than visual. In spite of their visual handicap the children are cheerful and their faces gleam with a sense of achievement



Blind girls absorbed in a new and satisfying task: making clay birds. [Photo: National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi.]

Demonstration on animal modelling for blind children. [Photo: National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi.]



that comes to them through the programme.

Creative activity

The creative-activity programme occasionally arranged for blind children in the museum and sometimes conducted by the museum's exhibit-preparation staff at the blind schools involves animal modelling in clay and plasticine. The staff of the museum assist children in making animal forms and shapes. Here again it was a revelation for us that many blind children have remarkable modelling abilities. The forms and shapes they make have a unique character, because they represent what is perceived only mentally and shaped by the hands.

Encouraged by their performance in modelling, the museum organized last October, during the special Wild Life Week celebrations held in India, an animal-modelling contest for blind children. About a hundred children participated in the contest and attractive prizes were

awarded to several of them. The five schools for blind children in Delhi cooperate with the museum most enthusiastically in all these programmes.

A special museum

The museum also undertook a project to design a museum specially for the children of one of the leading schools for the blind. This is now operating successfully. While organizing seminars and workshops on development of educational material, the National Museum of Natural History includes representatives of the blind to assess the special requirements that are to be considered in formulating programmes for blind children. This pioneering example of conducting special programmes and activities for the blind by the National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi, it is hoped, will be followed by other museums in India in fulfilling a social obligation which is generally lost sight of by those who have eyes, but perhaps not 'vision'.

Handicaps prohibited— travelling exhibitions in Sweden

Stella Westerlund

Stella Westerlund was born in 1948 in Stockholm, Sweden. M.A. at the University of Uppsala (French, English, linguistics) and the University of Stockholm (art history). Teacher at the University of Madison, Wisconsin, United States, 1974. Since 1976 employed at Riksställningar (Swedish Travelling Exhibitions), currently in charge of public relations, information and press, study programmes and conferences. Co-editor of the annual catalogue and the quarterly bulletin *På Gång*. Contributed to the book *Museums and Children* published by Unesco in 1979. Secretary of the Swedish National Committee of ICOM.

Thomas Knuthammar

Thomas Knuthammar was born in 1945 in Solna, Sweden. B.A. at the University of Uppsala (history of art, ethnology, archaeology, pedagogy). courses in information and printing. Assistant at various Swedish museums, 1971. Now at Riksställningar in charge of public information and press relations, editor of the annual catalogue and the quarterly bulletin *På Gång*. Organizes tours and programmes for certain large exhibitions.

The directives concerning Riksställningar, Sweden's travelling exhibitions organization,¹ laid down by the Swedish Parliament in 1974, require all cultural institutions in Sweden to take into consideration the needs of the disabled. Since its inception in 1965 the organization has in fact prepared a number of exhibitions on or for disabled people.

Exhibitions on physically handicapped people and their lives

In 1971-73 a major exhibition was shown at twenty-three different places in Sweden. It dealt with disabled people and the resulting handicaps that marked their lives. Created in collaboration with students from Stockholm's School of Arts, Crafts and Design, it allowed visitors to go through the exhibitions in wheelchairs and experience the obstacles that confront physically handicapped people everywhere—in a kitchen, a sitting-room, a noisy street, a shop, a job centre and a sheltered workshop. The exhibition also showed how restrictive an improperly designed physical environment can be for everyone, whether disabled or not. It also described the negative social and economic consequences of physical disabilities. The exhibition was supplemented at every venue by lectures,

discussions and locally organized exhibits. Explanatory material was printed in abundance and sold to visitors. Information on the most important items in the exhibition was presented in a study folder and on a display board.

For the International Year for Disabled Persons a collection of printed exhibits has been compiled. This exhibition is entitled *Participating and Equal?* and consists of drawings of the everyday surroundings of disabled people, with captions in enlarged print. Separate pages with the captions in Braille are also available. One screen provides background information; the others deal with dwellings, traffic/transportation, work/occupation, the world around us and culture. The themes depicted were discussed with reference groups composed of representatives of disabled persons' organizations.

Exhibitions produced centrally should, however, contain complementary material of specific local interest, for example to show how a particular area or municipality has managed to solve problems relating to disabled persons, to highlight both the positive and negative aspects, or to assess plans for the 1980s. A blank cardboard screen is included in each exhibition so as to encourage the preparation of such local-level exhibits.

Two hundred copies of *Participating*

and *Equal?* are available for sale to municipalities, social-welfare boards, recreational-activity organizers, libraries and organizations for disabled people.

Exhibitions for the visually handicapped

Silk, Velvet, Rags... is a small exhibition which uses dolls to display different Western fashions from the thirteenth century to the present day, specially manufactured for people of all ages with impaired vision. Different types of instructional material are included. The dolls were made by Birgit Assmundson-Kindströmer, whose own son has reduced vision, and the exhibition is produced in collaboration with the Swedish Society for the Visually Handicapped and the Tomtebodas School for the Blind (Tomtebodaskolan).

The Feel of Pottery, an exhibition produced in 1978, is meant specially for the visually handicapped and deaf-blind persons. The exhibition covers the historical development of clay pots from the Stone

1. Riksställningar, a Swedish state foundation, organizes both its own travelling exhibitions and those prepared by other organizations. It encourages different groups to express themselves through the exhibition medium and gives help and advice on exhibition organization. It works in collaboration with museums, local education authorities, adult-education organizations, art societies, libraries, municipal arts committees and other interest groups. Subjects covered include art, handicrafts, social debate, cultural history, the environment and science and technology. Exhibitions range in size from 100 to 200 square metres. New exhibition methods are tested and can include other media such as film and audio-visual media. One special type of exhibition takes the form of small-scale kits for schools and discussion groups.

About 5 per cent—the largest exhibitions—are designed for museums. Fifty per cent go to schools, 25 per cent to libraries, 5 per cent to adult education organizations and 15 per cent to other bodies. Exhibitions may be sent on tour throughout the country for one or several years. Two to three weeks in any one place is the normal period, however. The recipient pays rent per fortnight plus freight charges to the next place on the itinerary.

Age to the present day and consists of seven displays mounted on screens, with reliefs accompanied by captions in Braille and enlarged print. Even people with normal vision enjoy the high-relief pictures, painted in muted colours.

In addition, three open display cases show a model of an Iron Age pottery kiln and replicas of old clay pots. Everything can be handled and touched. All texts are recorded on cassette tapes. The pots were manufactured using ancient techniques.²

In conjunction with *Gold from the Steppes*, an exhibition held at the National Museum of Antiquities, Stockholm, in 1979, two exhibition kits were specially produced for the visually handicapped: *The Animals of the People of the Steppes* and *History through the Fingertips* [see also the article that follows]. Instructional material provides insights into the fascinating Scythian-Siberian style of casting animals, which was created more than 2,000 years ago. There are sixteen life-size copies of the Scythian objects in wood and leather, the originals of which are in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

Documents in Braille and enlarged print and on cassette tapes are also included, packaged in two wooden cases.

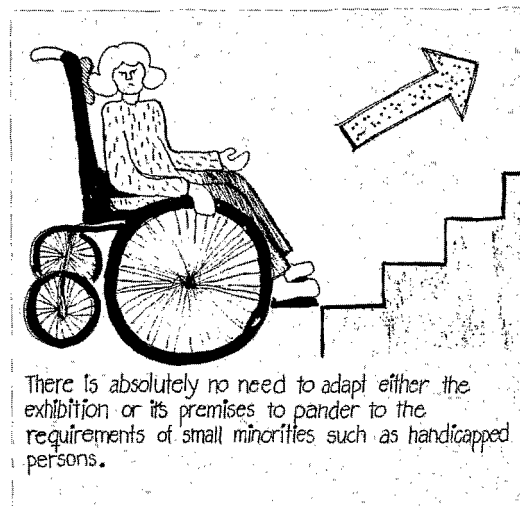
There are plans to include an exhibition based on rock carvings from Bohus county in western Sweden in the 'touch and feel' series and exhibitions—*Touch the Rock Carvings*. The carvings are presented in the form of reliefs and detailed sections. Captions are provided in large print and Braille.

Exhibitions on deafness

In 1976 Riksställningar produced a photographic exhibition on visual means of communication called *Body Language—Sign Language*.

Everybody uses body language, gestures and mime. The deaf have their own highly elaborated version, which is a

2. This exhibition was conceived by Allan Bernving, Chairman of the National Association of Deaf-and-Blind People and originally created by the Malmö County Council and the Cultural History Museum in Lund. Anki Bolander, a potter, was responsible for the design.



There is absolutely no need to adapt either the exhibition or its premises to pander to the requirements of small minorities such as handicapped persons.

Drawing from the brochure *How to Make a Rotten Exhibition* published by Riksställningar.

Handicaps Prohibited: visiting the exhibition in a wheelchair enabled people to experience the physical obstacles that the disabled encounter everywhere.

[Photo: Hans Doverholm.]





The travelling exhibition *Body Language—Sign Language* being packed for transportation.

[Photo: Karl-Olov Bergström and Olof Wallgren.]



Liljeholmsgården shows work at a day-care centre for mentally handicapped adults in Stockholm.

[Photo: David Skoog.]

purely visual means of communication. Two different types of sign language exist, one widely used in many countries and another that is referred to as 'Swedish sign language'. The exhibition uses pictures and captions to explain these languages and was prepared in collaboration with the Workers' Educational Association (ABF), which is also responsible for circulating it.

Riksställningar has also provided ideas and practical advice on the technical design of *The Deaf Child in the Centre* exhibition. The exhibition was produced in 1978 by a group of teachers from experimental and special schools for deaf children and children with impaired hearing. Blow-ups illustrate attitudes to deaf people, communication, learning, the role of the teachers and the school environment. The organizing committee circulated the exhibition itself and organized courses at schools for the deaf and at special seminars.

Creative work among the mentally handicapped

An anthology of material based on the theme 'Together—Communicating with Each Other in Words, Sounds, Images and Movements', has been tried out in study circles for mentally retarded adults. The aim is to inspire them to work with various means of aesthetic expression.

On completion of the test, one hundred units of the exhibition kit entitled *Together*, were produced in 1970 and sold to educational organizations, mental homes, hospitals, social welfare boards for the mentally retarded, high schools, etc. A syllabus is included, produced in collaboration with the Board of Education, The Lecture Bureau and the National Concert Tour Scheme. The National Institute for Information on Educational Aids provided support.

In 1976 the *Creative Activity at Vipeholm* exhibition was produced. It consists of a selection of pictures using paint and fabrics and some objects in wood and pottery, the majority of which are produced at the Vipeholm Hospital for the Mentally Retarded. Britta Olsson, an artist working with fabrics, uses there an artistic therapy she calls 'freely creative games'. Creative work can be a way to self-awareness for mentally retarded people and reinforce their self-confidence. Since many mentally retarded people do not use spoken language the exhibition showed how a language can be developed. The exhibition examined the situation in Sweden and the results that can be obtained from free creativity and tried to answer the question as to why this activity was so limited. The aim was to stimulate creative activity in mental homes and promote discussion among teachers and others working with the mentally retarded. The exhibition toured sixteen

mental homes, institutions and high schools in 1976/77.

The *Liljeholmsgården* exhibition was prepared in 1978 in collaboration with the Swedish Society for Industrial Design. It consisted of photographs and finished products based on the theme 'The Power of the Hand'. It illustrated pedagogics at Liljeholmsgården, a day-care centre in Stockholm for mentally retarded adults. The centre has workshops for weaving and printing fabrics, making dolls, etc., and provides training in everyday activities like shopping, using the underground railway, going to the cinema, etc. The exhibition was shown in nine venues in 1978/79.

An exhibition kit was produced in duplicate on the basis of this material. The kit contains information folders with photographs from Liljeholmsgården and objects manufactured there. A book on Liljeholmsgården has also been published, describing in words and pictures the efforts of the mentally retarded to show above all that they are ordinary people who are making progress at their own level.

Crying Bird is an exhibition dealing with an autistic person, Monika, born in 1952, who lives deep in her own fantasy world. She expresses herself in images and her drawings, paintings and sculptures reveal a vast domain of make-believe, replete with monkeys, snakes, cats, fish, tigers and many, many birds. Her artistic

production has been collated by Margit Sjöman, a writer who has been working for many years to foster the creativity of children and young people. The good rapport Margit Sjöman built up with Monika resulted in the exhibition. This material has been exhibited at several places including the Swedish Cultural Institute in Paris, in conjunction with the exhibition on handicaps, *A Society for All*, that was shown there in 1979. Riksställning's tour started in February 1981.

[Translated from Swedish]

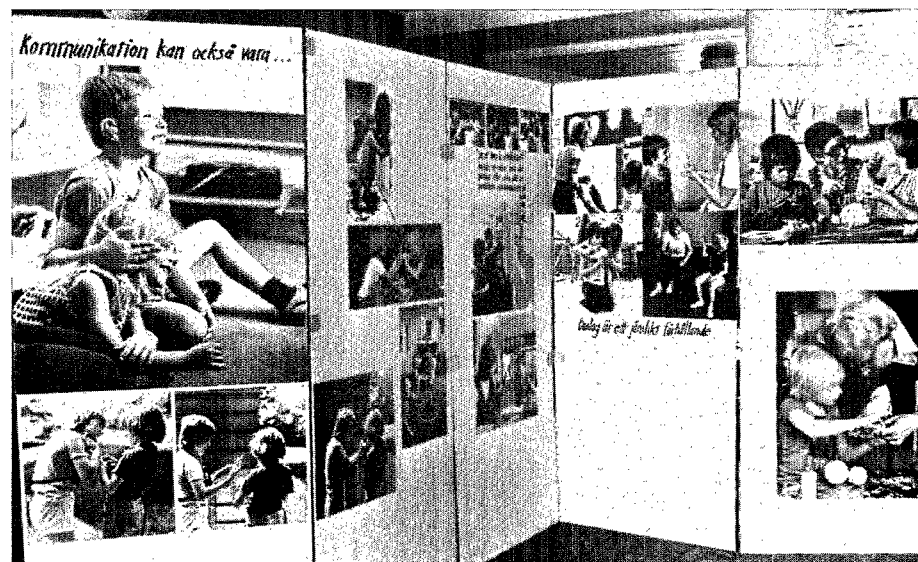
The exhibition kit *Together—Communicating with Each Other in Words, Sounds, Images and Movements*, an anthology to inspire mentally retarded adults, was produced in a hundred copies in 1970.

[Photo: Karl-Olov Bergström and Olof Wallgren.]



Monika, who is autistic, communicates only through her paintings which are shown in the exhibition *Crying Bird*.

[Photo: Karl-Olov Bergström and Olof Wallgren.]



A freelance photographer helped a group of teachers of deaf children to prepare the exhibition *The Deaf Child in the Centre*.

[Photo: Karl-Olov Bergström and Olof Wallgren.]

Tactile pictures in Stockholm

Astrid Wexell

Astrid Wexell was born in 1938. B.A. at the University of Uppsala, 1964. Specialized in archaeology—studies towards a doctorate in this field. Managed archaeological excavations at the Archaeological Institute of Uppsala University and the Central Board of National Antiquities, 1967-75. Curator at the Museum of National Antiquities, 1976—currently in the section of co-ordination and development, responsible for the project of handicap adjustment at the museum. Has published articles on archaeology and lately on handicap questions in Swedish periodicals. Member of the Swedish Archaeological Association and of ICOM.



Jens, a pupil at Tomtebodaskolan in Stockholm, reading one of the tactile books in the series 'In Touch with History'. The inside of the cover is visible here. It bears a significant picture, that of a wheel, and the title *The Bronze Age* in both relief letters and Braille. The symbol of the series, the God Odin riding on his horse, is above. [Photo: Gunnel Jansson, Central Board and Museums of National Antiquities, Sweden.]

The Museum of National Antiquities (Statens Historiska Museet) in Stockholm is a central museum whose collections range from prehistory to the medieval period. Acting on the principle that the transmission of knowledge to *all*, regardless of their functional impairments, is one of the museum's most important tasks, it works actively for what is termed 'handicap adjustment': special exhibition methods, new study materials and educational activities.

These innovations include tactile material for the visually handicapped. One project involves the production of teaching materials for visually handicapped schoolchildren, a series of history books containing haptic¹ pictures and Braille text. Primarily intended for children of 9 and 10, the material extends from prehistory to the end of the medieval period. It aims to provide a pictorial supplement to the Braille books which the children use in school. An edition will also be produced in ordinary print so that sighted pupils can use the same material.

Tactile pictures are a still-untried medium. The museum's tactile books are thus an educational experiment, conducted in association with the School for the Blind (Tomtebodaskolan), and the National Centre for Educational Aids for the Blind (RPH-SYN), which produces teaching materials and distributes them to schools throughout the country.

Background

Tactile pictures, or 'touch pictures', are made up of structured surfaces and lines in low relief which can be 'read' with the fingertips. Maps and other graphic aids in relief have long been used in the teaching of the blind all over the world. Tactile pictures of ordinary objects, on the other hand, have been quite uncommon, owing to the conviction that blind people, es-

pecially those who have been blind since childhood, cannot interpret two-dimensional pictures of a three-dimensional reality. This view has changed in recent years, however, and pictures of this kind have begun to be used to some extent. Pictures can very often convey information more concisely than a verbal description. They can also explain relations and events more effectively than models or objects, the basic tactile materials.

As a result of a school reform in Sweden, blind children today are often integrated in the normal elementary school, which means that they use the same teaching materials as their sighted classmates. A problem arises with respect to the pictorial material in textbooks, which is usually dispensed with when the books are translated into Braille. In some cases these textbooks cannot be used at all, because pictures are so essential that without them the text is unintelligible.

Now that Braille books are produced in plastic from matrices, it has become easier to provide illustrations. This is also an advantage where talking books are concerned. When a verbal description of the picture does not work, the tactile picture can be used instead.²

'In Touch with History'

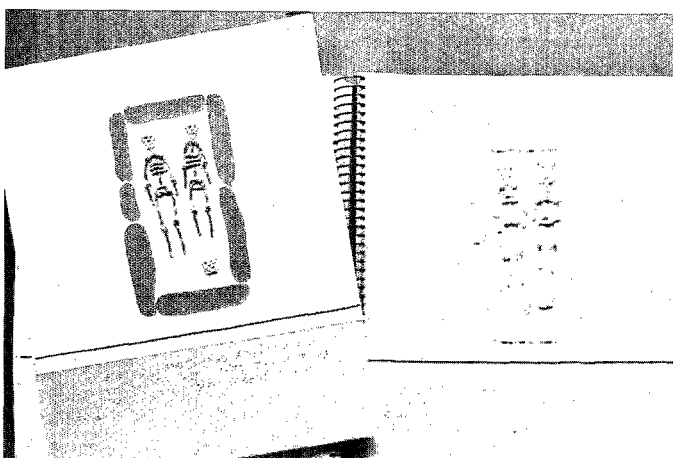
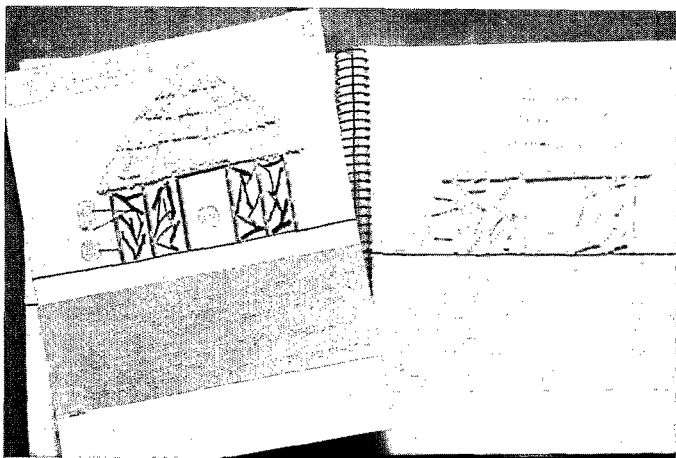
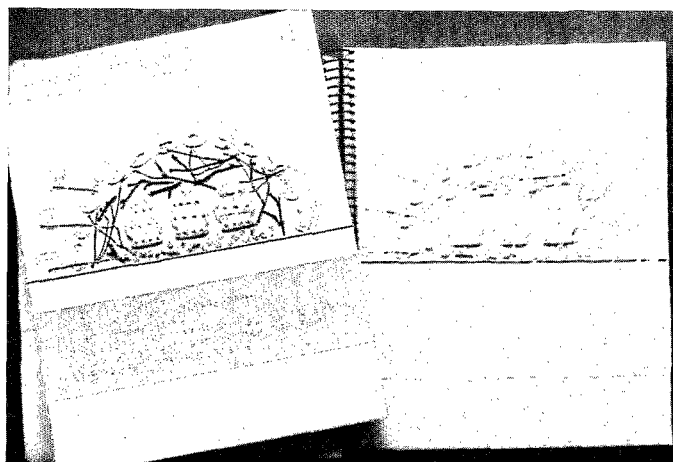
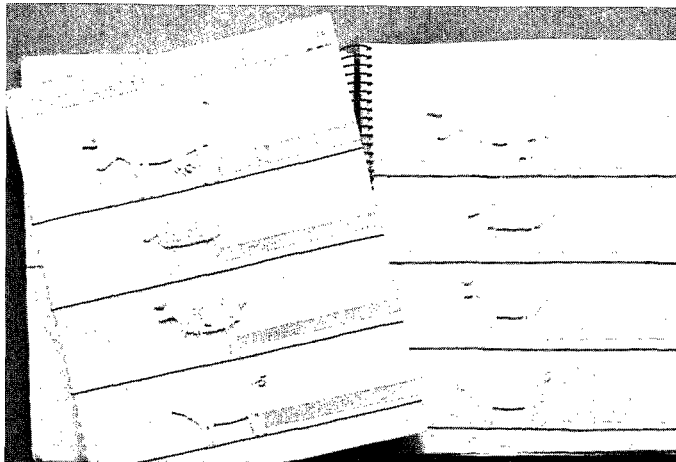
The Museum of National Antiquities receives large numbers of visiting schoolchildren every year. Its educational amenities also include work kits, which are loaned to schools. A series of kits entitled *History through the Fingertips* [already mentioned in the previous article] is being prepared for the visually handicapped. In addition to genuine exhibits or replicas there are tapes and booklets in ordinary print and Braille. This too is tactile material, including wooden relief enlargements.

Contacts with teachers at Tomtebodaskolan led also to the idea of producing teaching material in the form of plastic reliefs.

Book design. These tactile books (there are five in the series) are made of plastic,

1. Pertaining to the sense of touch (from the Greek *haptikos*: able to touch).

2. An interesting new technique for tactile pictures has been developed in Denmark, combining ordinary print on paper and raised plastic for both the pictures and the text. It has been used in the little book for children *Red Thread Riddles* by Virginia Allen Jensen and Polly Edman, co-published in 1979 (International Year of the Child) by Unesco and William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, London.



their picture pages being of a thin, paper-like quality. The matrices are made by gluing pictorial details and caption strips on to a cardboard base. In the printing process, heat and vacuum cause the plastic foil to adhere closely to the matrices.

The illustrations to this article show some of the content of the first two books in the series, which deal with the Stone Age and the Bronze Age. Basic archaeological or anthropological facts make up its themes: hunting, fishing, farming, trade, implements, types of burial, inventions, etc. The illustrations of rock carvings are of course particularly gratifying. The tangible representation of Bronze Age life (trumpeters, a man ploughing, fishermen and solar emblems, etc.) are very stimulating to the imagination.

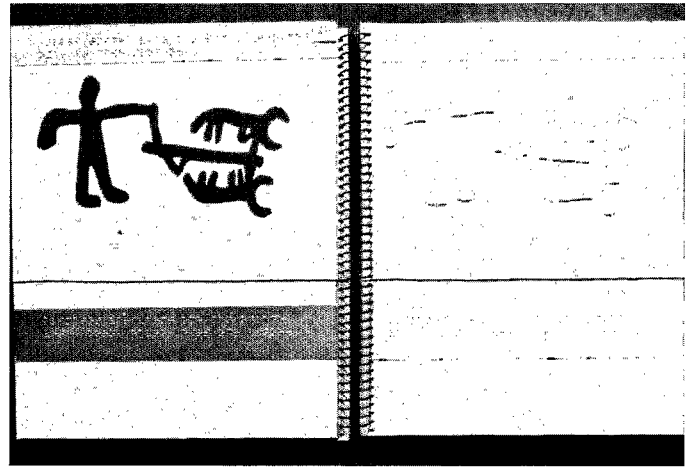
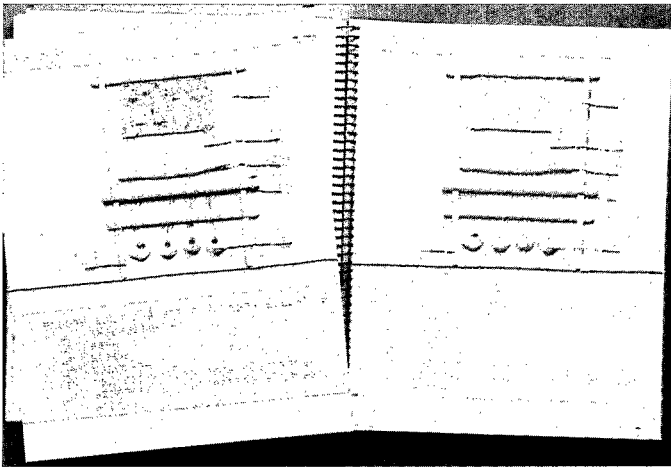
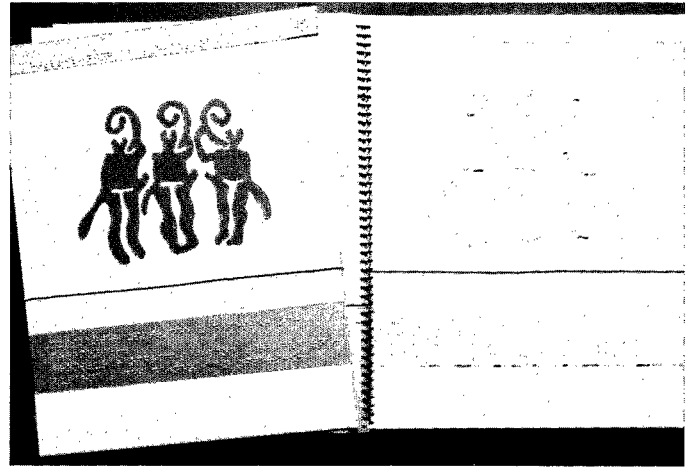
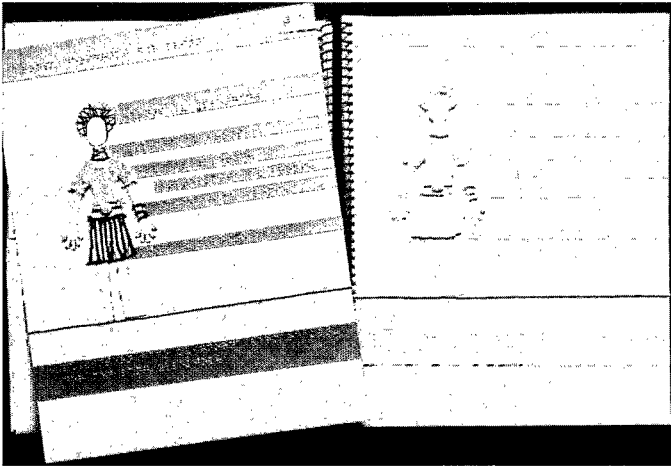
One of the basic ideas underlying the tactile books is that the picture is the main vehicle of information. The texts illustrate the pictures, and not vice versa. Hence the latter must be simple and carefully designed; excessive detail would make them hard to read and understand.

Certain rules govern the composition of these tactile pictures. Depth, perspectives or overlaps do not work. Propor-

tions should be correct within each picture. It helps to use the same material consistently, e.g. sandpaper for stones. Realistic effects are achieved by the correct depiction of shapes and structures of various kinds: this is done by building up the matrices with the aid of wood, cloth, modelling clay, etc., in order to convey the right sense of materials.

Co-operation and development. The planning and design of the series is based on co-operation with Tomtebodaskolan and teachers in the elementary school. At the museum itself two persons are involved in the project: a consultant designer in charge of book design and production of matrices, and the author, an archaeologist, responsible for editing. Our designer has evolved the structure of the pictures in consultation with a design teacher at Tomtebodaskolan. The National Centre for Educational Aids for the Blind, which prints and distributes the books, will also administer the loan of the study material to be produced by the museum in the form of exhibits and worksheets in connection with this series. When the first books were distributed for testing, we asked teachers to reply to questions concerning their content and design. We

Children are greatly drawn to archaeology. In these tactile books we try to give them basic facts in simple pictures: farming, pottery and burial customs from the Stone Age book (matrices are shown on the left). [Photo: Gunnel Jansson, Central Board and Museums of National Antiquities, Sweden.]



were gratified by the positive response received from both pupils and teachers. One pupil has recorded his viewpoints in a detailed review. These comments provide an admirable summary of the problems involved:

I think there ought to be an Ice Age map and a map showing what the country looked like after the ice had melted. And I think the Viking Age should be included (on the time axis). In the house (page 7, point 2) it is hard to tell one thing from another. I think the cow's udders are too large (page 8). And I think the pig's tail should point upwards (page 8). I don't think you can see which stick is which (page 10). I think the graves are the best thing in the book. Now I will go on to the Bronze Age book. I think the man looks as if he has a tail (page 1). I don't think he should. I think there ought to be an amber bead, and then I think it ought to say 'sword' on 3 and 'bronze axe' on page 4 (page 2). I think the trumpeters have tails too, and then one of them has his feet joined together (page 6). The man in the chariot drawn by the two horses is hard to feel, because the wheels are in such funny places (page 11). I want you to send the other books soon. I think it is a good thing that you are bringing out these books.

Another pupil spontaneously remarked to this teacher: 'If I had been given the pic-

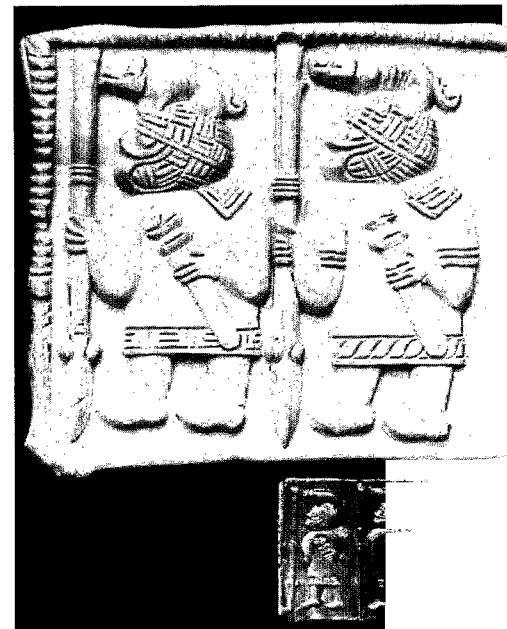
tures when we read about this, I would have understood more. It's no fun just having a text.'

The tactile picture is a complex medium, in terms of educational methods, and the experience gained through our books will therefore help us in adjusting the permanent exhibitions, of which tactile pictures, in the form of maps, charts, etc., including general introductions, should form an integral part.

I believe it is very important for blind children to have access to illustrated teaching materials and to be trained in pictorial interpretation. The latter is essential if pictures are to be genuinely useful. Here, as in so many other respects, research and development work is needed concerning methods of pictorial production and interpretation. i.e., learning methods. If these tactile books can make a small contribution to this end, we will have achieved one of our main aims.

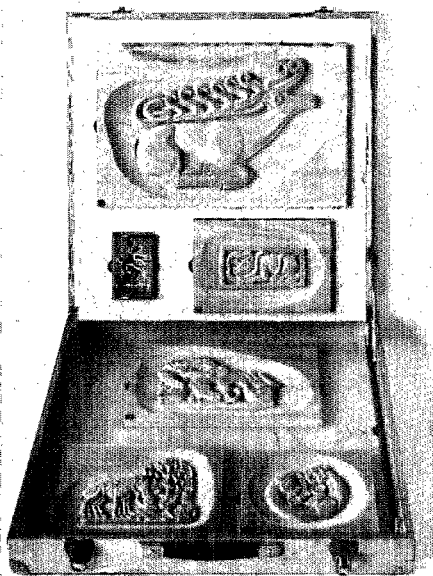
[Translated from Swedish]

Wooden enlargements are useful if the original exhibit or a copy is too small to be read with the fingertips. This bronze plate is actually a prehistoric matrix and it is a good example of the art of the Late Iron Age. A copy of the plate and a wooden relief which enlarges it three times belong to a work kit on the theme 'boat graves' in the new series *History through the Fingertips*. [Photo: Gunnel Jansson, Central Board and Museums of National Antiquities, Sweden.] ▽



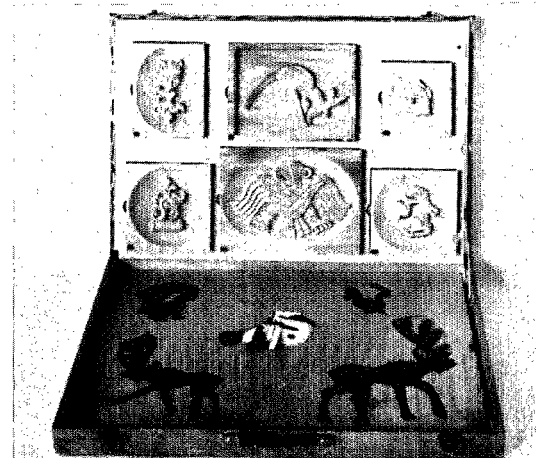
◁ In the Bronze Age book matrices are made of different natural materials such as sandpaper, string, wood, clay, etc., so that the plastic reliefs are as realistic as possible. The motif of the trumpeters comes from a rock carving in southern Sweden.

[Photo: Gunnel Jansson, Central Board and Museums of National Antiquities, Sweden.]



Animals of the Steppe Peoples—work kits produced in connection with an exhibition about the Scythians and Scythian-Siberian art organized in 1979 by the Museum of National Antiquities, in co-operation with the Museum of Mediterranean Antiquities. Wooden reliefs and copies of a leather and felt swan can be taken out of the boxes and examined. Taped information and booklets in ordinary type and Braille give ample knowledge of this fantastic art. The kits are now distributed by Riksställningar throughout the country (see preceding article).

[Photo: Gunnel Jansson, Central Board and Museums of national Antiquities, Sweden.]



Glimpses of special activities in Poland

Sophia M. Płominska

Sophia M. Płominska was born 1937. M. A. in art history, Warsaw University, 1958. Assistant at the Łazienki Palace, Warsaw, a branch of the National Museum, 1960-62. Senior Assistant in the Office of the Director of the National Museum, 1963-66. Private stay in the United Republic of Tanzania, 1966-71. Chief, Department of Education and Public Relations since 1971; head of the office responsible for the annual national competition on fine arts and music for high-school students since 1976. Managing editor of the quarterly bulletin of the National Museum. Member, Art Historians Association; won the special 'Contribution to Culture' award, 1978; medal of the National Commission for Education, 1980.

Disabled people in Poland have a special legal status and enjoy certain privileges. Public attitudes towards them are in accordance with these legal principles as well as religious sentiment. Special government grants are given to them, there are 'special care' government hostels, sanatoria, etc., and, of course, medical care is free for all.

Museums are in principle open to all handicapped people but, since special facilities are lacking, only some of them are able to overcome the difficulties involved and organize special visits and activities. The brief notes that follow certainly do not constitute a complete evaluation of the situation throughout Poland but only glimpses of some noteworthy efforts of Polish museums.

National Museum, Warsaw

Special groups are often received by the National Museum. Children and adolescents come in from the Institute for the Blind, a well-known home run by nuns at Łaski, not far from Warsaw. In the medieval sculpture gallery of the museum they are guided by staff of the Educational Service—who also give lectures in special institutions for disabled people—under the supervision of the gallery curator. These staff members are art historians and archaeologists with no special background in working with disabled people. Hence the visits, which include 'hands-on' possibilities, are organized together with the person(s) from the institute escorting the latter.

'Encounters with Works of Art' were organized during the 1960s in the tuberculosis sanatorium, at Rudka near Warsaw, in the Gostyn neuro-psychiatric hospital. Original works were presented to patients in the hospital's residence and commented on by museum staff. Among the themes chosen were medieval decora-



Blind children in activity workshops at the Archaeological Museum, Krakow.
[Photo: Robert Łapanowski, Krakow.]



tive art, tapestries, Russian icons, drawings by the artist Jan Matejko, etc. The encounters were organized in exactly the same fashion in the sanatorium as they were in the museum.

When these activities involved the physically or mentally disabled, however, the approach was different. The Centre for Motor Rehabilitation at Konstancin, not far from Warsaw, which treats very young people affected by serious lesions, initiated a series of special programmes. Here too the members of the educational service give lectures accompanied by slides. These encounters are not organized as lectures but as informal sessions devoted to art history, intended to break the inevitable monotony of the hospital and to stimulate the artistic interest of the patients. For obvious reasons, references to the canons of beauty or to the harmony of the human body were avoided in these talks and the effort was very well received.

Lectures for elderly people suffering from physical handicaps only have also been organized in the special public home at Marysin, near Warsaw.

Xawery Dunikowski Sculpture Museum

This museum is installed in the Krolikarnia Palace, a late-eighteenth-century edifice located in a handsome park near Warsaw. It is a branch of the National Museum. It co-operates with the union of blind ex-servicemen to organize special visits for them and also has a programme of visits by groups of patients recently treated at neurological and psychiatric

clinics. These groups are taken in hand by the health and rehabilitation dispensaries and number between ten and fifteen people each. They are made up of men and women between 18 and 60 years of age, with varied backgrounds but who have no current professional activity. Accompanied by a doctor, a psychologist and a nurse, these recently cured patients thus have the opportunity to break their isolation by getting to know the work of the eminent Polish sculptor Xawery Dunikowski (1875-1964). The keen interest of the visitors in the works of sculpture they see here, is shown by the lively debate that takes place during and after their visits.¹ The therapy offered includes visits to museums, outings to the cinema or to the theatre, etc.

National Archaeological Museum, Warsaw

To the best of our knowledge, this museum is the most active among all Polish museums in preparing special programmes for disabled persons. For seven years now it has been carrying out programmes for children and adolescents at the Institute for the Blind at Laski, already mentioned above. Exhibitions, competitions and history courses are arranged. The museum also welcomes people with motor disabilities from the Konstancin centre referred to above. The exhibition halls of the museum are spacious and located on the ground floor; they pose no problem for the passage of wheelchairs.

Lectures accompanied by slides at the Warsaw psychiatric hospital focus on ar-

chaeology and the history of the early Middle Ages. Doctors consider them to have a very favourable therapeutic effect.

Retarded children and those with problems of vision are also welcomed by the museum. The exhibition on the beginnings of the Polish state was particularly appreciated by them, for it contained many models and a choice of very striking objects.²

The Archaeological Museum, Krakow

This museum carries out a variety of activities for blind children in co-operation with the Institute for the Blind at Krakow. It has organized special excursions to archaeological excavations, which children enjoyed tremendously—even more than sighted children of the same age, judging from the keen interest they showed. They themselves suggested the topics for lectures they wished to hear. These results have been achieved through very close co-operation between schoolteachers and the museum staff.³

[Translated from French.]

1. Information supplied by Mrs Alexandra Kodurowa, Chief Curator.

2. Information supplied by the Curator, Mr Jan Sieklicki.

3. Information supplied by Professor Dr Kazimierz Radwanski.

Adaptations in Japan

Soichiro Tsuruta

Soichiro Tsuruta was born in 1917. He graduated from Tokyo University in 1941. Assistant Scientific Officer in the Ministry of Education, 1945-50. Deputy Director, National Park for Nature Study, 1951-68. Director, Department of Programmes, National Science Museum, 1968-78. Professor of Museology, Hosei University since 1979. Has written several publications on general museology, museum training, museums in Japan and throughout the world.

Like bedridden senior citizens, infants and others, disabled people are among the roughly 30 per cent of the population that cannot visit museums. Hence opening their doors to them is part of the wider campaign of Japanese museums to go beyond the 70 per cent of the total population that constitute their maximum potential public today.

This being said, I shall attempt to sum up here the approach of museum workers in Japan to their many visitors who suffer from the physical or mental impairments that constitute handicaps. Activities for blind people are to be found in many Japanese museums, but I will not go into these, since such work is amply covered elsewhere in this issue.

It is not so difficult to share exhibitions and demonstrations with the deaf and dumb, for they can read and write. A few colleagues in our museums have since learned sign language! Problems are most serious with those who are totally unable to use their hands, feet or bodies as a result of congenital or acquired physical disability. The mentally disabled ought to be considered as potential visitors to our museums, but the provision of proper facilities, methods and specialists appears to be so complicated and expensive that there are in fact very few museums that try to take up the challenge.

Facilities and programmes

There are no extraordinarily successful examples of museum work with the handicapped in Japan. Most of the recently established museums, however, give at-

tention to this need, and have adapted their facilities and equipment accordingly.

The number of museums in Japan is growing rapidly. In 1980, for example, more than eighty new museums were being constructed. The public museums among them generally provide for easier access for the handicapped: ramps instead of staircases, specially equipped lifts, special washrooms, flat and smooth floors for wheelchairs. The Yamanashi Prefecture Art Museum (opened in 1978), the Yamaguchi Prefecture Art Museum (1979) and the Iwate Prefecture Museum (1980) are good examples.

Wheelchairs are loaned freely in Japanese museums and are very popular. Curators at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka carried out a survey on the adaptability of these wheelchairs by using them themselves to go around the visitor itineraries in the display, recreation and restaurant areas. They were entirely satisfied with the results, and concluded that not only the wheelchairs and the methods of display were suitable for the

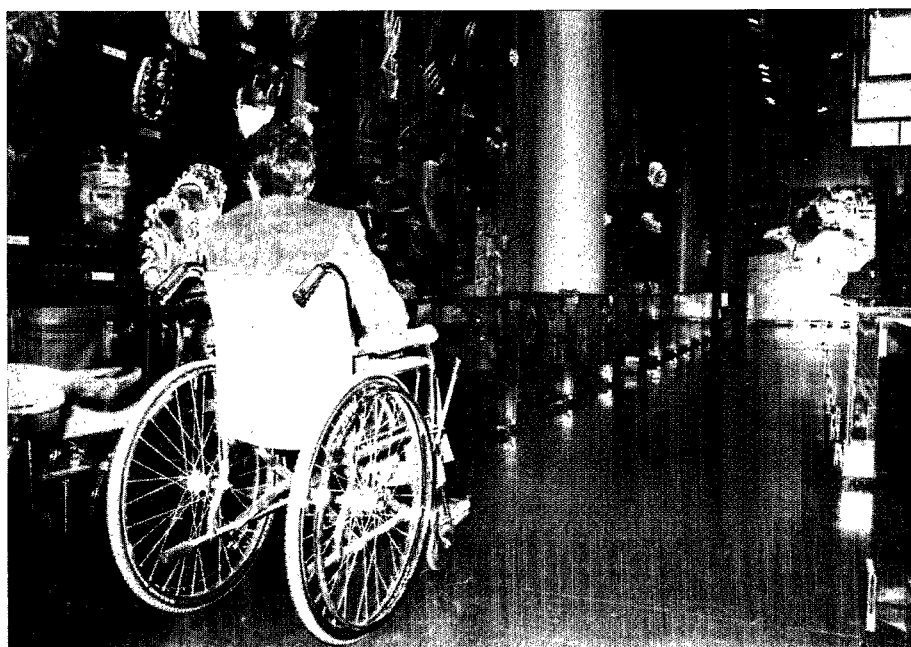
handicapped people but also that the museum buildings and interior facilities were equally adequate.

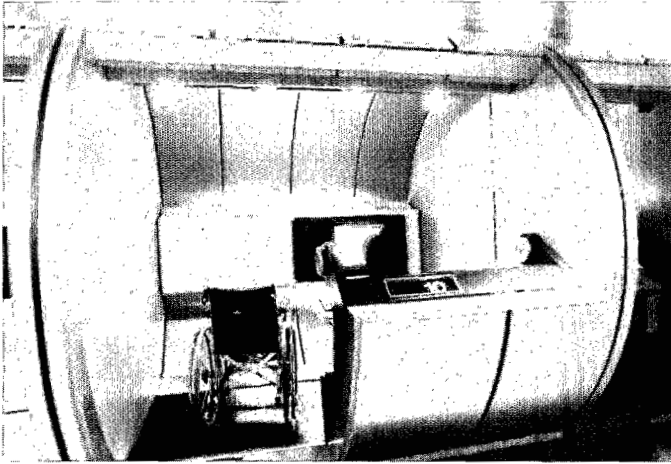
One particular case is that of a museum bus specially equipped for the physically handicapped, who can remain in a wheelchair to get on and off, the bus being equipped with an automatic lift system.

Although most museums do not yet have clearly defined separate programmes for the handicapped, they emphasize a cordial and open welcome, paying special attention to meeting the practical needs of their visitors.

The National Science Museum, however, has worked out special programmes for groups of visitors from special schools or institutions for the handicapped. After discussions and consulta-

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ETHNOLOGY, Osaka. Visitors' itineraries in the exhibition areas are wide enough to allow the passage of two wheelchairs at the same time. [Photo: National Museum of Ethnology.]





Video-tape booths are also specially equipped so as to be operated from a wheelchair.

[Photo: National Museum of Ethnology.]

Specially equipped washroom for locomotor disabilities. Doors can be easily opened and closed by a 'touch' button. A buzzer and light signal can be used by a disabled person to call for help if needed.

[Photo: National Museum of Ethnology.]

tions between the staff and schoolteachers, the practical schedule for the school visitors from the school is fixed and special rooms, specimens and instructors are made available as needed. Specially equipped study rooms (these are actually 'learning rooms' where the visitor gets direct experience of objects and their message) are also provided. Programmes for the handicapped should not be maintained separate from those of other visitors, for this might discourage the former, and reinforce their sense of isolation. So the museum staff tries to offer them programmes where they are together with other people. They believe that mutual understanding, co-operation and, as a result, happier, more balanced relationships between handicapped people and the others will come about through this sort of approach.

Development for the future

New policies for the disabled have been defined in the present International Year and as a result museum facilities are being renovated and expanded. Almost all the museums in Japan could be appropriately adapted within the next ten years. Special programmes will be developed over the next five years and can be expected to reach a satisfactory stage of advancement within fifteen years.

Policies and practical programmes outside museums are already well advanced, for example special education systems for the handicapped, vocational education and employment opportunities and well-planned social-welfare programmes. The attitudes of the general public towards the handicapped are improving, and people are gradually coming to share their company as normal individuals.

Tucson, Arizona

In praise of darkness: the Hands-on: Japan exhibition

I read that a man had a small rock garden with a pool, a pavilion and bamboos. His wife was a poet, and he wished her to have a quiet spot for meditation. He separated this retreat from the rest of the garden with a hedge of dwarf pines. It was contained within a few yards, but he so carved the flat land that he provided a perspective seemingly of many miles. The winding path went by a waterfall, climbed through mountain foliage, passed a flower-sweet dell, entered a forest, came out by a lake where tall lilies bloomed, followed a slow river through a sunny green field and terminated at the door of a rustic cottage. Even so did Teacher gather into the small compass within my reach knowledge, beauty, chances of usefulness—and lo! the path we followed during fifty years has wound magnificently across the world to Nippon!

Helen Keller¹

Why Japan? Why also an exhibition of Japanese art for the blind? What would the blind and sighted derive from a showing of Japanese art works? And why not Mexican art, or the art of Africa, or modern art? To someone like myself, who is both an orientalist and a museum educator, the answer is as simple as it is subjective.

*Philosophy of the exhibition*²

The beauty of the objects exhibited in *Hands-on: Japan* resided in their unique combination of line, function and texture. This aesthetic is firmly rooted in the belief that since life and nature are divine and sacred, beauty consists in being true to the essential nature and purpose of the object, whether it is in the arrangement of a flower or in the organization of planes and volumes of an expressive temple figure. The Japanese accept 'things as they are' and if all is gratefully accepted, then man and nature are taken for what they are. Society, too, is accepted for what it is, with its winners and stragglers who are helped along the way. When the beauty of external appearances is then allowed to become an inner focus, it takes on an austerity that is extraordinarily simple because one is not trying to control, resist, acquire or gain anything. It is a simplicity born of 'abandonment' which brings about a state of creative 'seeing'. The blind poet-writer Jorge Luis Borges writes: 'I reach my centre, my algebra and my key, my mirror. Soon I shall know who I am.' This is the essential part of the learning process in the exhibition: to discover for oneself what is true. *Hands-on: Japan* as a participatory exhibit became a place of intense poetic awakening for the possible realization of the aesthetic self.

We learn from teachers. But teachers are not always found in schools or universities. The educational system itself can only begin to teach us about life and that too only partially. What we learn sometimes depends upon our own powers of insight. Yet this insight is the direct result of the quality of teaching, not the quantity of things taught. The concepts which form the basis of Japanese aesthetics (and of the exhibition) aim at the sharing of artistic activity, which at the same time provides the learner with intellectual and spiritual

Joshua Goldberg

Joshua Goldberg is a specialist in oriental art, with degrees in the fine arts, oriental studies (Japanese language and literature) and art history. He has lectured and written on oriental art, comparative religion and teaching methodologies and on the social responsibility of museums. Currently Curator of Education at the Museum of Art, University of Arizona, Tucson. His two most recent exhibitions have been *Hands-On: Japan, A Sensory Experience for Blind and Sighted* and *Tankas: Form and Revelation in Tibetan Art*. He has also recently prepared a discussion guide for adults and children on aggression and violence, based on Georges Rouault's series of sixty etchings and aquatints entitled *Miserere*.

1. Extract from the *Journal* of Helen Keller, 14 April 1937, on the eve of her arrival in Japan.

2. The exhibition was conceived by the author and organized by him at the University of Arizona Museum of Art from 20 October to 24 November 1980. It was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency in the United States.

nourishment. It is this perception of creativeness, like a mirror held up to oneself, that permits self-discovery.

The exhibition was a total sensory experience. Japanese literature, religion, music and film all complemented the 'hands-on' environment. So did plays about blind fictional and historic figures in Japanese culture, such as the musician Semimaru. Performances of the *koto* (zither) *samisen* (lute) and *shakuhachi* (bamboo flute) as well as instruction and practice in Zen meditation likewise facilitated communication by presenting and utilizing non-traditional ways of learning.

The aesthetics of Japanese art

The Japanese aesthetic concepts as brought out in *Hands-on: Japan* were reflected in many works in the exhibition. These concepts can become part of the dialogue between a teacher or communicator and his audience. Even more important than sensitivity, knowledge, and a keen appreciation of the works is the potentiality for *self-discovery* through the manipulation of the material at hand. The learner who has remained unaware up to that point, finds himself or herself on a co-operative position with respect to what is either seen or felt.

In the following enumeration, therefore, the questions posed were points of inquiry or topics for dialogue:

Asymmetry and *irregularity*. This is the avoidance of the strictly geometrical and the perfect. How does this relate to art, nature and the human form and personality?

Simplicity. This is the most economic means to achieve a desired effect. It is both naturalness and innocence; a restrained, subdued and an otherwise unobtrusive elegance. The question might be asked: 'How can one achieve this 'simplicity' in one's own life?'

Suggestion, ambiguity, profundity, latency, and the much-in-little. How can such concepts be applied to one's own perception? Can these aesthetic concepts introduce a more vital living presence in both nature and art?

Detachment, indifference to contradiction, tranquillity (inner and outer), *sensuality* (Thoreau's 'all nature is my bride'), and *materiality*. In these concepts there is no abstraction; all is concrete, ready to be experienced. Compare, for example, 'indifference to contradiction' and 'detachment' with the sculpture of Bāsho, the itinerant poet-traveller and the sculpture of the Monkey (a symbol of man's incessant grasping of material possessions).

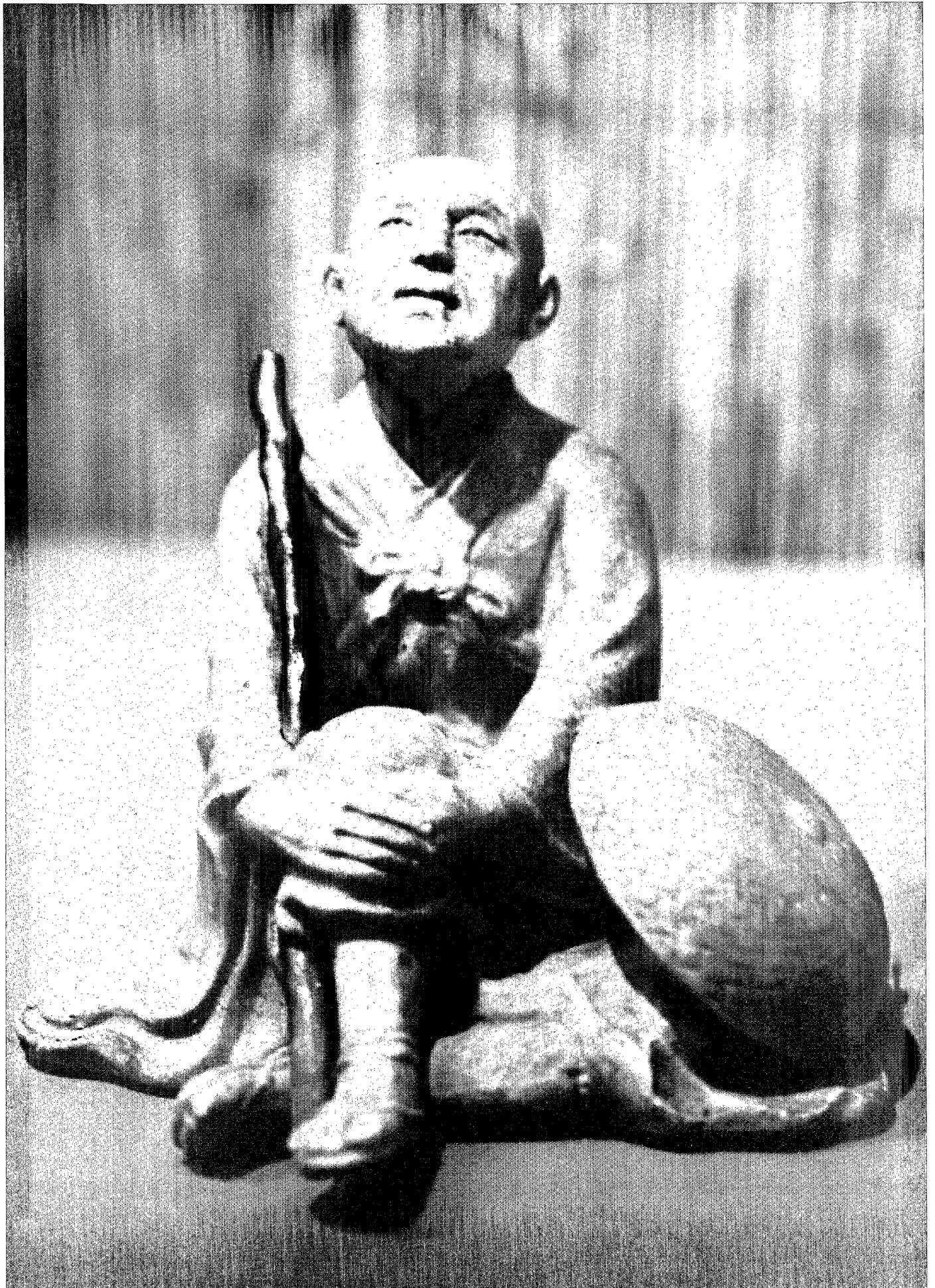
Perishability. It is perishability that perhaps leaves the strongest impression on the Japanese mind and underscores all the other concepts. It was best understood by Yoshida Kenko (1283-1350): 'If a man were never to fade away like the dew of Adashino, never to vanish like the smoke over Toribeyama, but lingered on for ever in the world, how things would lose their power to move us!' (Adashino was a cemetery and Toribeyama a crematorium). How can this quotation be explained through recourse to one of the works of art?

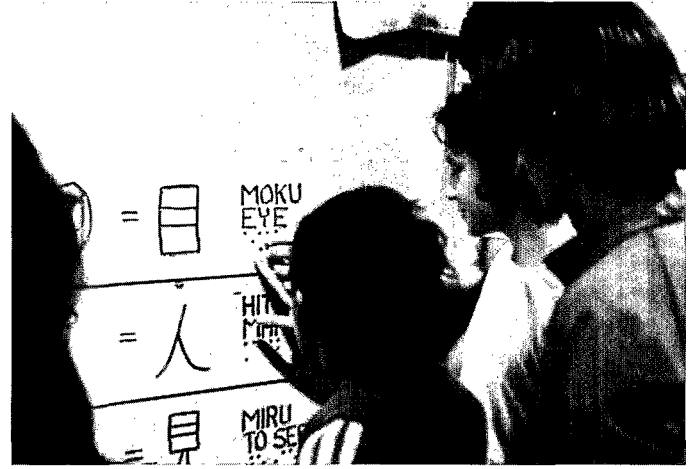
The process realized

The application of these concepts in *Hands-on: Japan* was done in two ways: through touching and through verbal reinforcement. Specially trained persons who attended 'special education' workshops were the tour guides. However, the teaching was atypical in that the guides, whom we refer to as 'docents', never 'explained' anything, but rather acted as catalysts for self-discovery. The idea, for example, with blind and sighted children, was to place both in a 'co-operative position' to what was said, seen or felt. And since most young children normally have a feeling for being and doing together, they were encouraged to co-operate and share the experience. The sighted children thus became acutely aware of the limited visual perception of their new friends. This learning situation was the first step in the eventual breakdown of the stereotype of the blind as strange, detached, slow-witted or mystical extra-sensory persons.

A similar interface is somewhat more difficult to achieve with adults, but

Bāsho, the haiku poet (stone, Showa period ▶ (1926-)).
[Photo: The University of Arizona Museum of Art.]





Bronze monkey of the late Edo period (nineteenth century).

[Photo: The University of Arizona Museum of Art.]

Blind and sighted children touring the exhibition, and touching panel of Japanese 'Kanji' characters.

[Photo: The University of Arizona Museum of Art.]

it is not impossible. It remains to be seen what effect, if any, the exhibition has had on blind and sighted adults, as well as on the children. It should be mentioned that potential visitors to the exhibition whether blind or sighted, adults or children, were 'prepared' in advance through lectures and demonstrations given by museum staff and volunteers to schools, associations and foundations.

The sense of touch is often the best avenue for human perception. Through feeling, tapping, gently pressing, and careful examination, the mind gains a notion of the order, structure, motion, temperature, rhythm, line and texture of the object. However, it should be kept in mind that the sense of touch has at least two functions: to discover or identify, and to appreciate or enjoy. At the same time that *Hands-on: Japan* encouraged thinking with the hands, constantly experimenting with them, the visitor learned not only how to be more efficient, useful and sensitive, but also to open his 'inner eye'—to coin a Buddhist phrase—so that perception acquired fresh meaning.

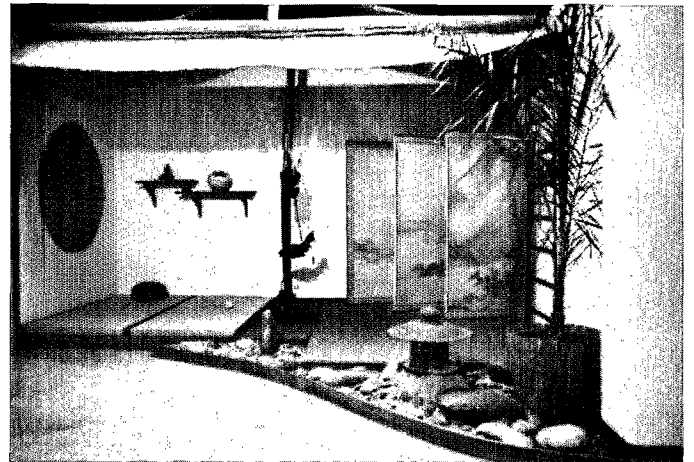
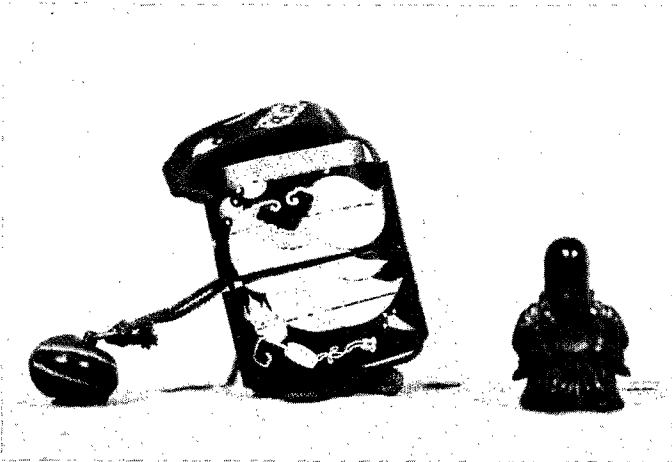
The works of art

It can be said that the ultimate value of art is to help us learn who and what we are, to understand our potentialities and compatibilities. These fundamental questions can bring about a state of mind which will let the learner discover the object progressively. The object as 'learning initiator' will then point not only towards discoveries in art but also towards the rehabilitation of the human will and the rebirth of faith and confidence in the human person. This was indeed the primary goal of *Hands-on: Japan*.

Overall view of the *Hands-on: Japan* exhibition.

[Photo: The University of Arizona Museum of Art.]





The tactile works chosen for the exhibition included ceramics, textiles, folk art, lacquer, sculpture and musical instruments as well as household or cultural articles. Specific pieces comprised a thirteenth-century wooden temple relief and a similarly dated wooden sculpture of the Buddhist Guardian of the East, a large seventeenth-century Mishima Karatsu dish with impressed designs, a seventeenth-century Ko-Kutani sake bottle in the shape of a gourd, and a roughly textured seventeenth-century Tamba green-tea container. Also exhibited were lacquer boxes of varying sizes from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, decorated in gold, bronze and mother-of-pearl (in relief); folk carvings of household gods; kimonos and bolts of fabric; *inro* ('medicine' cases) and *netsuke* (small-scale sculptures which are a part of the accessory of the *inro*); musical instruments such as a two-metre *koto*, a *samisen*, a drum, and a *shakuhachi*. Masks, *tsuba* (sword guards) and dolls of different sizes, materials and uses were also shown together with *futon* (Japanese bedding), *zabuton* (Japanese pillows), and household utensils. One of the most interesting displays was the wood panels with a number of Japanese characters in relief that could be traced with the fingertips, in order to 'feel' the origin and evolution of the Japanese script.

The *inro*, in particular, was a wonderful work of art to handle. This 'medicine' case has three to five small compartments that can be pulled apart. And since each of the sections is tethered by a cord which runs through the entire *inro*, there is no fear of dropping a section. Furthermore, on the end of the cord is a bead (*ojime*) and a *netsuke*. The bead loosens or tightens the cord, allowing the dismantling or putting together of the sections of the *inro*. But

Inro (medicine case) and *netsuke* of Fukurokuju (god of wealth, luck and longevity) (nineteenth century).

[Photo: The University of Arizona Museum of Art.]

Japanese 'tea' area with *Jizai-Kagi* (hearth-hanger), hearth, tatami mats, seventeenth-century folding screen.

[Photo: The University of Arizona Museum of Art.]



Cha-no-yu, or 'tea ceremony' with blind and sighted participants.

[Photo: The University of Arizona Museum of Art.]

it is the *netsuke* which fascinates almost everyone, especially the children. It is often humorous, an exciting tool for learning about Japanese culture and mythology. For example, Fukurokuju is one of the seven gods of luck. He is always shown with an enormous head and depicted as old and bearded as he is also the god of longevity. His name in fact means 'wealth, luck and longevity'. But it is his elongated head which is the subject of many jokes and, in Japanese mythology, an attraction to the other gods of luck and to young boys, who mischievously play with the benevolent deity, climbing on his head or shaving it. Sometimes Fukurokuju will exhibit his calligraphic skill with a brush tied to his head! A verse by the nineteenth-century Zen monk-painter Sengai was, for example, a starting-point for discussions that took any number of interesting turns:

Fuku-roku-ju [wealth, luck, longevity]
Not a soul in the world
Is in possession of all three:
If the top is long
The bottom is short.

The exhibition area which received the most attention was the Japanese tea-room with tatami mats, open hearth, hearth-hanger and cast-iron tea-kettle. Included were the utensils for the ritual tea ceremony, which could be handled by the audience in special demonstrations.

Many of the works of art such as the *inro* and *netsuke* are easily employed and perhaps can be too much of a temptation to steal. These and similar objects were therefore placed in a specially made 'oriental' cabinet which could be quickly opened for access on the tour and securely locked away afterwards. Other works of art, either because of their material, condition or historical importance, were carefully secured to the pedestals and bases, and only allowed to be touched under direct supervision of the docents. When tours were not scheduled in the museum, all pedestals and bases were provided with plexiglass domes and securely locked. Although this procedure was most cumbersome and tiring for docents and museum staff, it did ensure the minimum amount of damage and prevented theft. The alternative would have been an exhibition of reproductions of inferior-quality objects.

In summary

Hands-on: Japan as a 'hands-on' exhibition reached beyond mere tactile sensation. It was an important learning discovery in the following ways:
The blind and sighted learned together in a unique way about a culture different from their own.

They learned to 'feel' through Japanese aesthetics, and to put into practice these aesthetic concepts.

The exhibition was a total sensory experience with accompanying events such as a recital on the *koto* and *shakuhachi* by two leading Japanese musicians, a lecture by a Zen abbot (to the blind in particular) on Zen meditation and on the development of one's 'inner space', demonstrations and participation in crafts and the tea ceremony, and plays about blind fictional and historic Japanese figures.

Blind and sighted children toured the exhibition together to ensure a dynamic interface.

Tape-recorders and cassettes of the history of the tea ceremony and specific art works were made available.

An illustrated catalogue outlining the history of the blind in Japan, with relevant examples of poetry, was used as a learning tool for future events in the school or museum environment. The catalogue had a Braille section.

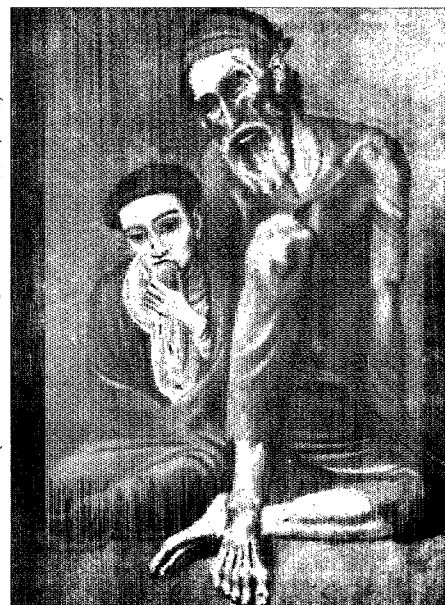
The organizers of the exhibition intended it to reach through time, opening up to blind and sighted alike a small portion of that perspective of many miles referred to by Helen Keller in the quotation that heads this article. It may have even quite unintentionally succeeded in conveying an impression of humanity that will outlast the beautiful trappings of the display and anticipate future events, restoring intellectual vitality and self-confidence to all who visited it through the imaginative reconstruction of human experience.

Picasso, perception and blindness¹

The allegory of the blind man, as Sir Roland Penrose has pointed out, 'pursued Picasso throughout life as though reproaching him for his unique gift of vision'. It is especially prominent in the work of his early years as a painter in Barcelona, where he found many models for his studies of the blind and produced such moving painting as *Celestina* (below) and *The Old Jew* (above right) in which the boy's keen dark eyes contrast so strongly with the dead eyes of the old man. For Picasso, 'seeing' an object was not enough; other faculties of the mind, the 'inner eye' of the imagination, had to be brought into play if perception was to lead to true understanding.



[Photo: Ricardo Canals. © SNARK International, Paris.]



[Photo: Pushkin Museum, Moscow. © SPADEM 1980, Paris.]



[Photo: Giraudon. © SPADEM 1980, Paris. Private collection.]



[Photo: © SPADEM 1980, Paris. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of William S. Paley.]

The Old Jew, Barcelona, 1903. Oil on canvas, 125 × 92 cm. *Celestina* or *The One-Eyed Woman*, Barcelona, 1903. Oil on canvas, 81 × 60 cm. *Boy Leading a Horse*, Paris, 1906. Oil on canvas, 220.3 × 130.6 cm.

Boy Leading a Horse (below right) has been viewed as an expression of this Picassian metaphor of the artist endowed with 'inner sight', a magician and guide with magnetic powers: the boy is leading the horse

without the help of reins. Above left, Picasso photographed in 1904 in the Bateau-Lavoir, the Montmartre building inhabited by painters and poets where he had a studio.

1. This page was first conceived and published by the *Unesco Courier* in its special issue, of December 1980 devoted to Pablo Picasso. *Museum* is grateful to the Editor-in-chief of the *Unesco Courier* for permission to reproduce the present photographs and text.—Ed.

For the future: the International Red Cross Museum in Geneva

Laurent Marti

Laurent Marti was born in 1929 at Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Began a career in journalism which he pursued for ten years both in Paris and Lausanne. Joined the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1964. Was sent as a delegate to the Congo, thereafter alternated between work at headquarters and missions in the field. He thus came to lead delegations of the Red Cross in Israel and the occupied territories in 1967 and in 1970/71; Greece (visits to political detainees, 1968/69); Bangladesh (1971/72); Cyprus (1974); Lebanon (1976); and Chad (1977/78, 1979 and 1980). Parallel with this, he served as assistant to the Executive Director, 1965-75; Deputy Director of the Operations Department, 1973-74; officer in charge of fund-raising, 1974-78. Deputy Director of the Personnel Department, in charge of recruitment and training of delegates since 1979. He is the inspiration behind the current project to create an International Red Cross Museum within the grounds of the committee's headquarters in Geneva.

A museum of the International Red Cross is being created in Geneva. The need for it has long been felt; indeed, it is in a sense a requisite. It will outline the past and contemporary history of a movement whose name is linked to the crises and changes of our century.

The story begins with the Italian campaigns of the French Second Empire. The extravagant waste of human lives which they caused haunted a chance observer, Henri Dunant, whose booklet entitled *Un Souvenir de Solferino*¹ was published in Geneva in 1862. This account sparked off the idea of first-aid societies and protection agreements. The outcome was an emblem: a red cross on a field of white; and a set of principles: 'The Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field'.

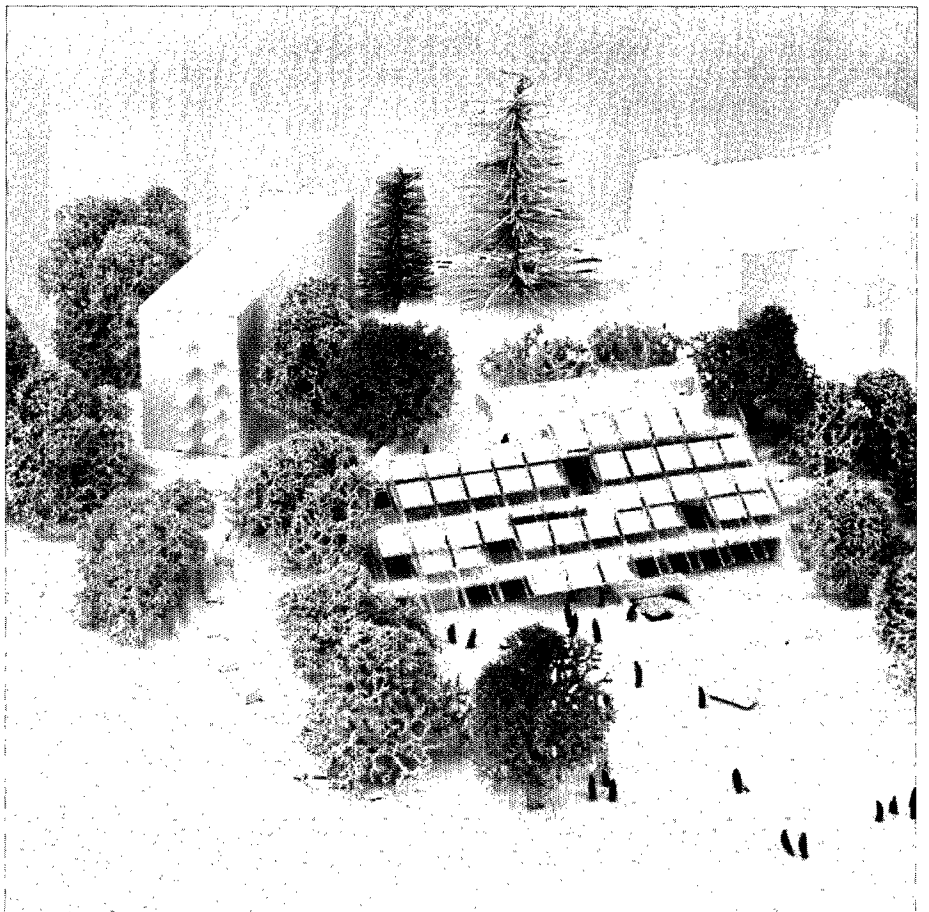
From 1864 to the First World War, the Red Cross was given ample opportunity to prove its worth. The Franco-Prussian War (1870) brought to light a new category of victim: the prisoner; the Russo-Turkish War (1876) imposed a new emblem: the red crescent; the Russo-Japanese War (1904) confirmed the universal nature of the idea; and the First World War (1914-18) gave an unforeseen boost to the International Red Cross. But the evil had reached intolerable limits.

For a time the Armistice and the founding of the League of Nations nur-

1. The Battle of Solferino (24 June 1859) was indecisive, but the casualties in the Franco-Piedmontese War with Austria were extremely heavy. Indeed, the figures of dead and wounded so alarmed Napoleon III that he offered the Austrians an armistice.—Ed.

Model of the future museum, which will be located between the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross and its annexe. It will follow the slope of the hill, with its roof at the level of the esplanade and its entrance at the level of the road. It will have three floors and one basement, which will house the permanent exhibition area.

[Photo: International Committee of the Red Cross.]



tered the illusion: war was forbidden, it would never happen again. National Red Cross Societies prepared for peacetime activities (natural-disaster relief, community welfare programmes) but the hope for reconciliation was vanishing rapidly. The nations of the world were divided in their choice of a social order. Once again relations broke down, and the result was the destruction of thousands of towns and villages, widespread massacres and 50 million victims.

Witness to, and actively engaged in this succession of dramatic events, the Red Cross made unparalleled efforts to relieve the suffering. Have its efforts been altogether successful? Today, it must adapt to the new organization of the world, to new types of conflict (liberation movements), and detention (political detainees), and to new threats to society (crime, drugs, pollution, terrorism). Is it still credible today? Will it be tomorrow?

Documents, pictures, objects

It is precisely this stocktaking and the guidelines that can be deduced from it that will be the basic themes around which the museum will be created. To illustrate these themes recourse will be had to documents, pictures and objects.

The documents will be of specific value or universal importance, for example an act ratified by heads of state, or even a child's letter to his imprisoned father.

The pictures will be chosen from among those in film and photo libraries

the world over, which trace the work of the Red Cross on the battlefield, for example photographs that capture the posture of a first-aid worker engaged in one of his daily tasks.

The objects will be presented for their intrinsic worth, or because they represent a moment in time, a gift, an act of mercy or love inspired by Dunant's ideas.

To display the collection there will be one temporary and twelve permanent exhibition areas, two auditoriums, a documentation centre and an audio-visual centre.²

A testimony to solidarity

In the final analysis—when the dead have long been buried—there yet remains to mankind the telling responsibility constituted by the seriously injured. Some of those who saw action in the Great War of 1914–18 are alive today. Thousands of people are the victors or vanquished of the Second World War. Each day brings with it a new conflict and its toll of mutilated and disabled. This category of disabled person, the product of war, is to be found time and again in the pages of the history of the Red Cross. It is equally to render homage to these permanently dependent soldiers and civilians that the museum is being created.

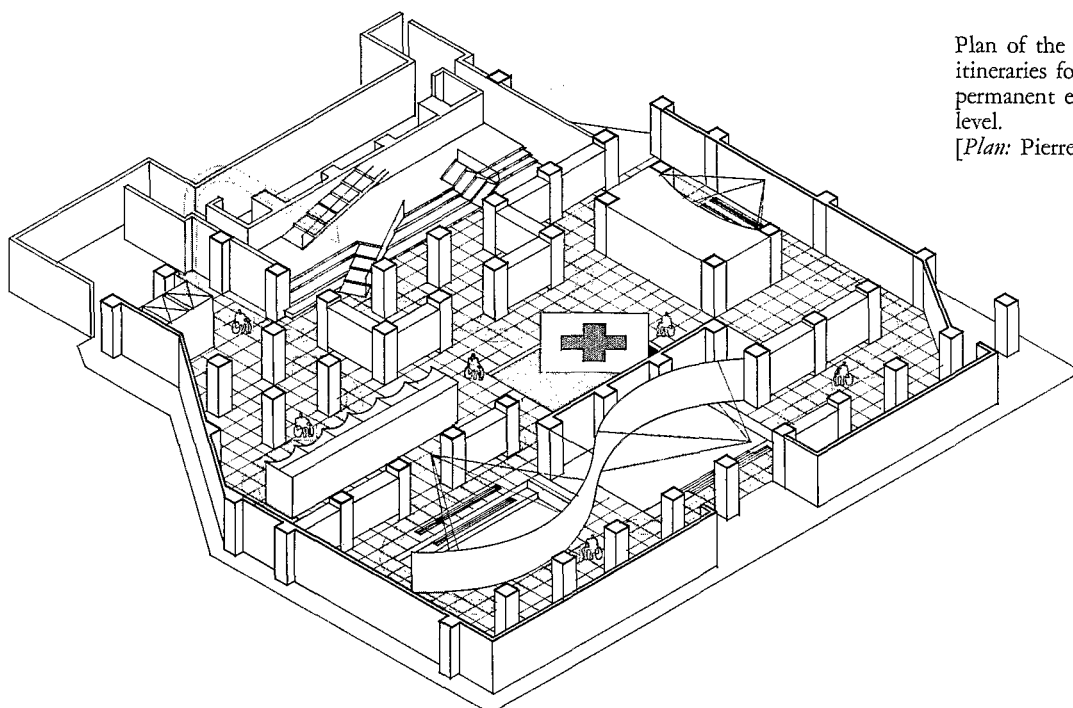
The museum's architect, Pierre Zoelly (Zurich) attaches great importance to enabling the handicapped whatever their disability, to follow without difficulty—that is to say, without obstruction—the

same itinerary as other visitors. The exhibition areas will thus be located on a single level. Elevators of ample dimensions will be provided for movement between levels (entrance, museum, library, cafeteria). Although the ramps are never the sole means of access, they conform, none the less, to the norms established for use by the physically handicapped. Exterior access routes are provided with the same facilities.

Moreover, in this domain, the International Red Cross Museum does not claim to be innovative. In an age when highways, work-sites and wars augment daily the number of disabled people, each of us is a potential victim and, hence, directly involved.

Society is at last organizing itself to include those individuals who have for so long waited on the sidelines; we have begun to realize that they are not only our brothers, but our alter egos as well.

[Translated from French]



Plan of the future museum showing itineraries for handicapped visitors in the permanent exhibition areas—all on one level.

[Plan: Pierre Zoelly, Zurich.]

² Georges-Henri Rivière, permanent adviser to ICOM, guided us in the planning of the museum.

Return and restitution of cultural property

A ceremonial slit-drum 2.3 metres high, 1.35 metres in diameter and weighing about 200 kilograms has begun its homeward journey to Vanuatu after an absence of more than eighty-three years.

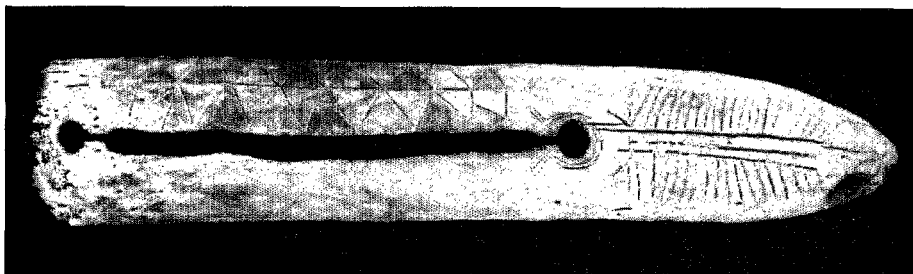
On Thursday, 26 March 1981, The Australian Museum Trust presented the drum to the National Cultural Centre of Vanuatu. This important ceremonial slit-drum from the village of Mele on Efate Island was donated to the museum in 1897 by Mr P. G. Black and is one of only four or five surviving examples of its kind in the world's museums.

Such drums played an important central role in the ritual life of Efate. No examples exist today in Vanuatu, though similar drums are made on other islands of this newly independent country.

Following independence in 1980, Vanuatu is seeking to obtain examples of the national cultural heritage which no longer are available locally. In this way it is hoped to develop the collections of its National Cultural Centre in Port Vila.

In agreeing to the cultural centre's request for the return of this slit-drum, The Aus-

The Vanuatu slit-drum



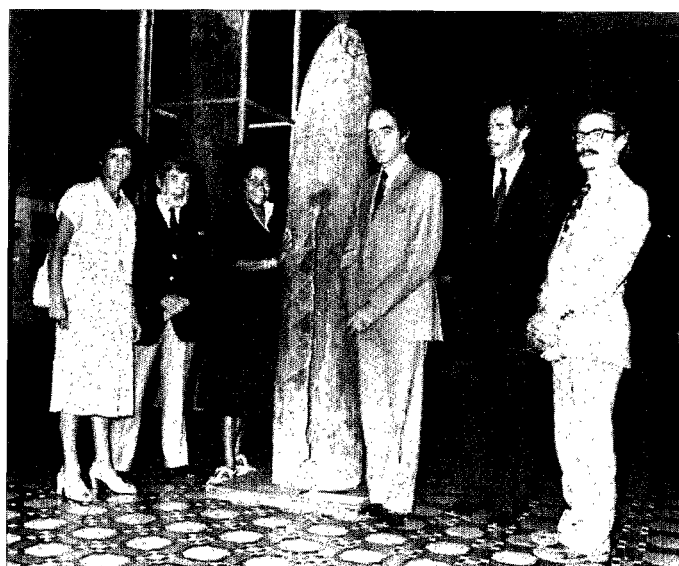
lian Museum Trust recognizes the importance of such items in traditional ceremonial life, and hopes that the return of the drum will contribute to the strengthening of cultural identity throughout Vanuatu.

Mrs Grace Molisa, of the Prime Minister's Office in Port Vila, officially accepted the drum on behalf of her government and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre of which she is a board member. Mrs Molisa was in Australia as guest of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs.

The slit-drum from Efate Island.
[Photo: The Australian Museum, Sydney.]

Mrs G. Molisa taking possession of the drum on behalf of the Vanuatu cultural centre in the traditional manner, by walking round the drum several times.

[Photo: Howard Hughes, the Australian Museum, Sydney.]



Mrs G. Molisa with (from left to right): Mrs K. Klugman, member of the Australian Museum Trust, representing the president of the trust; Professor H. Philp, Macquarie University, Sydney, representing the Australian National Commission for Unesco; Dr D. J. G. Griffin, director, of the Australian Museum; Mr R. North, Department of Foreign Affairs, representing the department; Dr J. Specht, Curator of Anthropology, at the Australian Museum, Sydney.

[Photo: Howard Hughes, the Australian Museum, Sydney.]

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