

Verbal Description and Tactile Diagrams

Verbal description and tactile diagrams can be used together or separately to create an experience in which visitors who are blind or have low vision can engage with works of art in a meaningful way.

With verbal description, you provide detailed descriptive information in front of the work of art. By adding a tactile diagram, the visitor touches the physical diagram or “map” of the work as you describe it.

The discussion can include, but is not limited to:

- Gallery space and how the object is displayed with other works of art; how the work relates to the viewer and the surrounding space
- Basic information: name, artist, size (dimensions), medium
- Discussion about what the person can and cannot see
- General overview: subject, form, color, style, historical and social context
- Brief explanation of what a tactile diagram is: overall exploration of the image and the codes
- Direction: clock face, landmarks; use a point of entry and move through the image coherently (don't skip around), use key features as points of reference
- Language: clear, precise, rich nouns and adjectives; give vivid details
- Relationships between the details and the whole
- Explain all art historical stylistic or descriptive terms
- Analogies to everyday objects or occurrences: the pitcher is shaped like a helmet, the sculpture is about the size of a teacup, people are selling goods in a large outdoor market
- Sensory information: texture, weight, temperature, smell, taste, sounds
- Reenact or mimic a depicted pose