Best practices and challenges working towards accessible museums in Estonia

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Estonian Art Museum – pioneer of working towards accessibility

First museum building in Estonia, which was designed for people with physical disabilities (2006)
It’s all about communication

Accessibility Programmes

The Kumu Art Museum is an open contemporary museum that continually aspires towards more extensive inclusion of people. We consider the necessities of different target groups and offer a wide variety of opportunities. Thus, the Kumu Art Museum has several activities for individual visitors, including visitors with special needs. We look forward to seeing museum visitors at exhibitions independently or within the framework of various public programmes. Kumu is also a visitor-friendly environment for groups, who can commission special programmes, excursions and visits.

Museum lessons

We believe that visitors should feel comfortable and secure in a museum. We want the museum to include all viewers, regardless of their special needs. The educational programmes of the Art Museum of Estonia are accessible to children, young adults and to all those with mobility, visual, hearing and mental disabilities. Art makes you see the unseen, art helps you share your thoughts and art touches us all. The museum lessons are usually held in Estonian or in Russian language.

Contact
1. How to get to and move around the museum
2. Descriptive translation that can be used at home or downloaded into your own cell phone
3. Programs for people with dementia
4. Silent mornings
5. Sensory map
6. Educational programs

- Special programs and study materials for blind people and people with visual impairment
- programs for children with mental diseases
Estonian Maritime Museum`s permanent exposition „Sea at the tower“ – equal possibilities to everyone
First elevator in a medieval heritage building in Tallinn old town
Exposition showcases
Accessibility for people with visual impairment

- Embossed (Tactile) room plans
- Guided roads
- Downloadable descriptive translations
- Tactile exhibits
Deaf people and people with hard of hearing
Videos with sign language
Videos with subtitles

People with intellectual and mental disabilities
Mapped and tested environment (it- and sound-solutions)

Hands on exhibits
Challenges of making the Estonian Open Air Museum accessible
Strenghts of open air museums: working with people with mental and intellectual disabilities

- Silent and supporting environment (there is always possibility to find non-crowded areas)
- Many hands on objects
- Domestic animals and nature
- Simple topics applied to everyone
Museum buildings and their specifics – challenges and solutions
Virtual tours
1. Descriptive translations
2. Tactile yard maps
3. Replicated objects, that can be touched
Elderly people

1. Mapping our territory according to their needs
2. Programs at the museum and at day care centres
No special educational programs only for kids with special needs.

All topics and programs should be applied to everyone