Case Study: Art for the Blind and Partially Sighted

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Describe the project in your own words

The project was to create resources relating to artworks in York Art Gallery’s collection in order to support blind and partially sighted people’s engagement with the visual arts. To enable this, firstly we had to create the links between York Art Gallery and YBPSS (York Blind and Partially Sighted Society) in order to understand the aims of both organisations within the project and how to bring these together.

Why did you apply for a team volunteering project?

Having heard in the Spring Term about the projects on offer I was immediately excited by the scope and independence they offered. I was also keen on the idea of working in a group towards something less strictly academic, whilst gaining experience in a field of work I might wish to pursue.

What were the highlights of your project?

Our first visit to the office of York Blind and Partially Sighted Society was fantastic. Speaking to a representative from the charity, we were able to both gain an insight into the organisation and its mission, and also discuss our myriad questions and ideas with her and the Assistant Curator of Arts Learning from York Art Gallery. It was hugely rewarding to facilitate communication between the two organisations and come away with a tangible plan.

What did you gain from your project?

The project was challenging and stimulating. I enjoyed working for a project which was unique in its focus and enabled me to develop both my creativity and ability to engage and work with new people. The project compelled me to think laterally and engage my imagination and senses with contrasting works of art. Delegating roles, putting our plan into action and seeing it through to a conclusion was a challenge, but an enjoyable one.

Did the project influence any future career plans?

The experience of working with those at a charity and in the arts was invaluable because it ignited a real interest in the third sector as a potential career path. On starting the project I didn’t have future career plans in the forefront of my mind but by throwing myself into a project that I was interested in I felt more and more excited about the opportunities after graduating.

What advice would you give students considering taking part in a team volunteering project?

Go for a project that you think you will both enjoy and be challenged by: if that is the case, you’ll meet lots of like-minded people and be motivated to pour energy and enthusiasm into it.