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MEDIA RELEASE

1 November 2016

Delight in the Value of Touch at the Guildhall Museum from November 18th 2016

Come and enjoy an innovative new museum experience at the Guildhall Museum. Entitled the Value of Touch and conceived by artist Wendy Daws, this extraordinary exhibition showcases art created by blind and partially sighted members of the Kent Association for the Blind Medway Art Group who have been inspired by the museum objects exhibited as part of the 'Weird and Wonderful' exhibition. This eclectic and challenging body of work will question the viewer's assumption that sight is a prerequisite for making great art.

The Value of Touch unveils a brand new series of tactile plaques in the museum's entrance area. Daws has created each plaque as touchable interpretations of the artworks. To accompany the exhibition there will also be a programme of audio described tours.

The artworks were created over a sixteen week period through a series of museum based object handling and creative workshops leading into a studio residency at Sun Pier House in Chatham. This has given the participants an invaluable opportunity to share their creativity with the public.

Artist, Helen says "I'm so grateful for the art group and being able to enjoy art and create again. I have Diabetic Retinopathy and with my sight loss I thought that door was closed to me, but it's opened again. It's been wonderful to be in the museum and get up close to the objects. We've been really lucky and I hope visitors enjoy our exhibition."

KAB Chief Executive, Eithne Rynne says "We are really excited about this exhibition; once again the Medway Art Group have produced incredible pieces of work showing great skill and talent. Wendy is a longstanding KAB volunteer and we are so grateful to her for continuing to lead this group with such enthusiasm and passion."





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Heritage Development Officer, Karen McKenzie says “It has been a pleasure working with Wendy this summer. As well as the KAB art group sessions, her family workshops have been hugely successful with hundreds of young people and their families enjoying hands-on crafts in the beautiful surroundings of the Guildhall Museum’s Main Chamber”.

This project was made possible with funding support from Arts Council England, Kent Association for the Blind, NKLA Arts Partnership and Medway Council.

The Value of Touch and Weird and Wonderful exhibition opens:

19th November - 16th April 2017

Guildhall Museum, High Street, Rochester Kent ME1 1PY

Entry to the museum is free.

Open 10am - 5pm Tuesdays to Sundays.

Look out for Wendy Daws' solo exhibition 'Enbosu' at the Rochester Art Gallery which opens in March 2017. Exploring notions of texture and tactility through the medium of Japanese woodblock and other mixed media, this exhibition is a sensory celebration of the power of art to engage an audience no matter what the viewers physical ability.

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

To request an invite to the Private View on Friday 18th November 4pm - 6pm please contact Wendy Daws directly mail@wendydaws.co.uk or tel: 07989 264768.

Wendy Daws studied at the University of Brighton. Her dissertation ‘The Value of Touch – Blind Alphabet C and Museum Approaches to the Visually Impaired Visitor’ is central to her art practice. As a volunteer with the Kent Association for the Blind she established the KAB Medway Art Group in 2006 and KAB Gravesend Art Group in 2015. www.wendydaws.co.uk

The art group celebrate their 10th birthday at the exhibition launch. To keep up to date with the KAB Medway Art Group you can follow their blog kabmedwayartgroup.wordpress.com and Facebook [KABMedwayArtGroup](https://www.facebook.com/KABMedwayArtGroup)





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Vocal Eyes is a registered charity working across the nation. Their mission is to work with blind and partially sighted people to enhance engagement with the arts through audio-description. www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk

Kent Association for the Blind has been supporting visually impaired people in the local area for over 95 years. The charity provides a comprehensive service which is tailored to the needs of the individual. We support people of all ages from toddlers to teenagers right through to people in their 80s, 90s and beyond.

For more information on the work of KAB visit www.kab.org.uk or contact Amy Van der Weide – Fundraising Manager: amy.vdw@kab.org.uk tel: 01622 691357



Photos by Gary Weston



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