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# The Routledge Handbook of Disability Arts, Culture, and Media

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# *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*

## The politics of sensorial access

Amanda Cachia

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### Introduction

In March 2016, my group exhibition, *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, opened at the San Diego Art Institute in California as the culmination of a four-month curatorial residency. *Sweet Gongs Vibrating* was a multimedia, multisensory exhibition that broke with ocularcentrism – that is, the privileging of vision over the other senses – by embracing myriad modes of perception. This project aspired to activate the multisensorial qualities of objects to illustrate alternative narratives regarding access, place, and space for the benefit of a more diverse audience, especially for people with visual impairments and/or blindness. I was especially interested in challenging the ocularcentric modality of curating exhibitions, and the tendency to rely on the convention that objects must be exclusively experienced through vision alone. It was my attempt at curatorial “haptic activism,” a term introduced to me by the Australian artist Fayen d’Evie (see Haug 2016), as I aimed to have the visitor directly touch all works in the exhibition as much as possible.

The challenge I posed throughout this exhibition centred on the role of the sensorium: imagine learning new information about a body, a material, or a place through the sweet taste of ice cream, the gong of a sculpture, or the vibration in a wall. The exhibition included the works of 20 local, national, and international artists, including one collaboration. These artists explored the multimodal possibilities of sculpture, site-specific installation, video, and works on paper, constituting an exciting and accessible template for how one might glean untold accounts of everyday surroundings. Each artist was invited to either contribute extant or create new site-specific work. Each piece encouraged multisensorial engagement to greater and lesser extents (touching, hearing, smelling, looking), provoking thoughtful critique on the methods by which sensorium can be activated through modes of creative and conceptual access.

Historically, the limited preoccupation with the concept of access in museums and art galleries has obscured the possibility of more generative sensorial-related content within exhibitions, displays, and other curatorial practices. In *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, I wanted to exhibit critical works showing their full range of sensorial and experiential possibilities as they pertain to the material, affective, and physical engagement with a wide variety of bodies. In doing so, I aimed

to persuade institutions to avoid reproducing existing biases about bodies. My idea was to move beyond the usual understanding of access and rethink what the phrase ‘visual culture’ means in our society, and how our museums and galleries are arbiters for this culture. What would happen if the museum began to rethink of itself as an institution for sensorial culture rather than purely visual culture? For example, “haptic activism” suggests that the navigation of space can be experienced through tactility and need not rely on the typically predominant sense of vision. Many scholars (see Spence & Spence 2008; Candlin 2010, 2017) have demonstrated that a tactile and multisensorial engagement with works of art and objects in a museum has many benefits, as it contributes to the visitors learning about its material qualities, and even offers clues about the maker of the work, in addition to offering pleasure and all-round enjoyment. While access provision is provided by larger museums around the world for visitors who are blind and visually impaired through monitored touch tours, such offerings are sporadic and inconsistent.

Part of the challenge is that a ‘lexicon of touch’ still does not exist. Spence and Gallace (2008) state that we “do not have a recognized set of terms to describe the tactile sensations elicited by various material properties, although there have been sporadic attempts over the years to educate people’s sense of touch...” (30). Touch is a much under-theorised and underutilised pragmatic and sensorial modality in the ‘visual’ arts.

In this chapter, I aim to show how the hierarchy of the senses might be realigned to allow more space for new knowledge to be generated through touch. I am candid in revealing some of the challenges and ultimately some of the failures of *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*. A lexicon of touch to *describe* tactile sensations is missing and so is a lexicon that describes *how* to touch. Most people are familiar with the general rule of no touching in an art museum, but when this rule is overturned, confusion can ensue in how to execute this engagement within the museum environment, with sometimes disastrous outcomes. Indeed, one might even go as far as to say that how to touch is more about art politics than art lexicon, because providing particulars on how to touch prompts more questions, such as how should we be touching in museums anyway? Is there a right way and a wrong way to touch? While a gallery or an artist may have a defined method for approaching tactile engagement, I believe these methods should be unpacked to push conventional access standards even further towards radical new pathways. This chapter reveals both the potential and the challenges to curating multisensorial contemporary art exhibitions by using *Sweet Gongs Vibrating* as a case study.

## The exhibition at large

Many examples of artwork in the show stimulated a number of sensory functions in the human body: Cooper Baker’s *Giant Spectrum* (2016) is an interactive audiovisual wall piece that displayed a live, moving spectral representation of the sounds it ‘hears’ through the flashing of lights. Much like light, sound comprises many different frequencies, and different sounds contain different frequencies with varying amplitudes. As sounds occur, the piece shows these changing parts as a moving visual spectral display. Patrons may interact with the piece simply by making sound, and any background sound present in the gallery will also appear on the display. As the visitor talks, yells, sings, claps, whistles, stamps their feet on the ground, or plays music, the piece displays the audio spectrum of the sound they are making (see Figure 16.1a and b).

The piece was effective insofar as the visitor was able to witness how movement, sound, and vision could function together in an artwork. However, it also operated as an inclusive object in the way that its flashing lights could give d/Deaf or hearing impaired people visual cues that announce sounds in the immediate environment, sensorial components to this piece that they may not otherwise have fully or partially experienced.

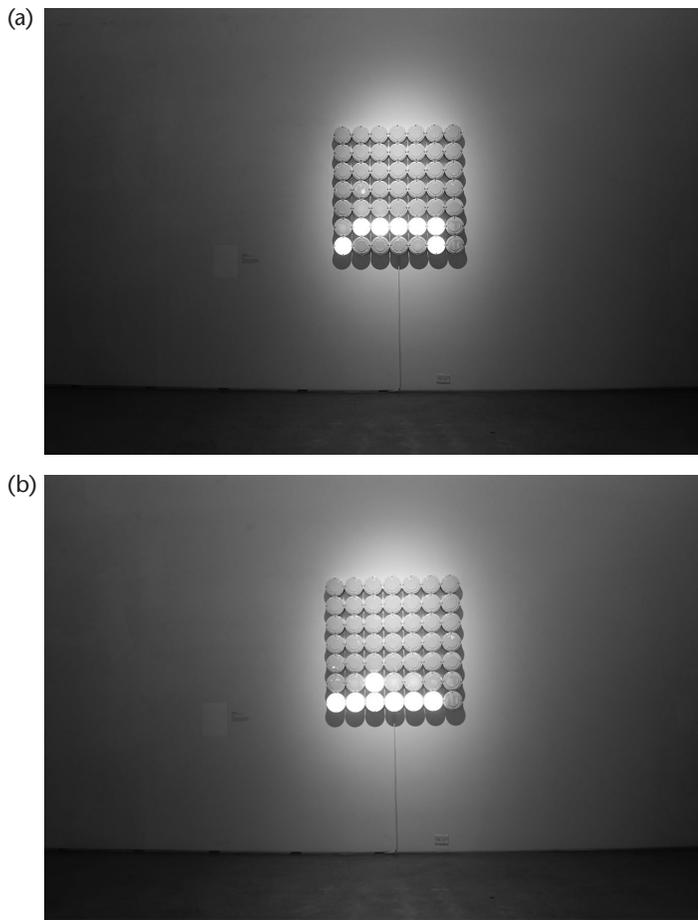


Figure 16.1 (a and b) Cooper Baker, *Giant Spectrum* (2016) in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

Another example is the work of Wendy Jacob, where she inserted the vibrational purr of a friend's cat into a drywall section of the gallery, creating a sound object that you can sense with your body in *Three threads an a thrum (for D.B.)* (2016). In 1993, Jacob animated a wall in the then new Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego to expand and contract with the steady pace of breathing, an action inspired by the artist's experience of sitting with her father while he was in a coma. *Three threads an a thrum (for D.B.)* is an echo of her earlier wall and addresses comfort in the face of a recent loss. This work did not rely on vision or hearing. Jacob launched her first vibration project in 2008 in Washington, DC at Gallaudet University, a private university for the education of d/Deaf and hard of hearing people in the US. She had taken a group of students from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where she was teaching at the time, to map out the aural shape of the space to engage the d/Deaf students in the school. She wanted to have both her MIT students and the Gallaudet students consider looking at deafness spatially as opposed to lack of audition. The students attempted to map the conversation between two deaf and two hearing individuals. This experience proved to be a very rich one for the artist, and vibration has been a key tool in the artist's work since that time (see Figure 16.2a and b).



Figure 16.2 (a and b) Wendy Jacob, installation shots of visitors engaged with *Three threads an a thrum (for D.B.)*, (2016) at the opening reception of *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

British artist Aaron McPeake, who identifies as visually impaired, created a series of bronze gongs suspended from the ceiling with black string. Each gong elicited rich timbres and tones upon contact with a handheld swinging mallet, which again elicited a rich conversation between movement, sound, and vision. McPeake provided titles for each of the gongs, along with creative description of the sounds each one would make as follows: *Eileen's Palette* (2008) history and creative intent; *Once I Saw It All* (2008), hum of a transformer, hiding; *I Broke Her 78 Records* (2007), guilt, regret, solemnity; *Breast Cancer Radiation Mask* (2008), fear, irritation; *Tainted Wedding Ring* (2007), a long reflection; *Family Photograph*



Figure 16.3 (a and b) Curator Amanda Cachia using the mallet to hit the gongs in Aaron McPeake's selection of gongs (2007–2010) in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

(2007), confused nostalgia; *Meditation Gong – After Derrick* (2009), seeking answers; *My Teddy Brownie* (2008), valuable friend; and *Wooden Spatula* (2010), uncertain of the recipe.

A visitor would be able to engage with the chain reaction of sensorial stimuli that the work offered, where they could start with haptically directing the mallet into contact with the gongs, which would then elicit sounds, which would then emit visual movement of the gongs as they swayed under the pressure of the mallet. This work was especially powerful in the effect that it, in turn, had on other multisensorial works in the show, for the sounds that the gongs emitted had an immediate impact on Cooper Baker's *Giant Spectrum*. When the gong clanged, the lights would flash vibrantly and energetically across the back wall of the gallery space, providing visitors with both a visual and sonic outcome of their tactile engagement between mallet and gong. It brought the entire gallery space to life and became the beating pulse of the exhibition (see Figure 16.3a and b).

I also included Raphaëlle de Groot's video, *Study 5, A New Place* (2015), which she originally created for an earlier online virtual exhibition I curated entitled *Marking Blind*. In the video, De Groot engages in a performance in which she fashions found materials collected in Florianópolis, Brazil (during an artist residency), on her head. They gradually obstruct her



Figure 16.4 (a and b) Raphaëlle de Groot, installation shots of *Study 5, A New Place* (2015) in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

sight completely as she creates a blind mask over her head. The video was a powerful work to include in this exhibition as an installation, but to fully activate the modality of touch for the audience with whom I was seeking to engage in de Groot's work, I asked her if I could include the original found materials she used to create her makeshift head mask. de Groot allowed me to place the materials as a disorderly bundle on top of a pedestal in front of the accompanying video (see Figure 16.4a and b).

In this way, we could not only see the physical detritus of what the artist was experimenting with on her face and head, but the viewer could also, importantly, touch those materials. As gallery visitors touched the bundle of scraps, I wanted them to explore the varied surfaces of de Groot's papers, ropes, roughly formed pieces of charcoal, plastic, and other materials. If they were sighted, they could visually observe how their touching actions mirrored the touching

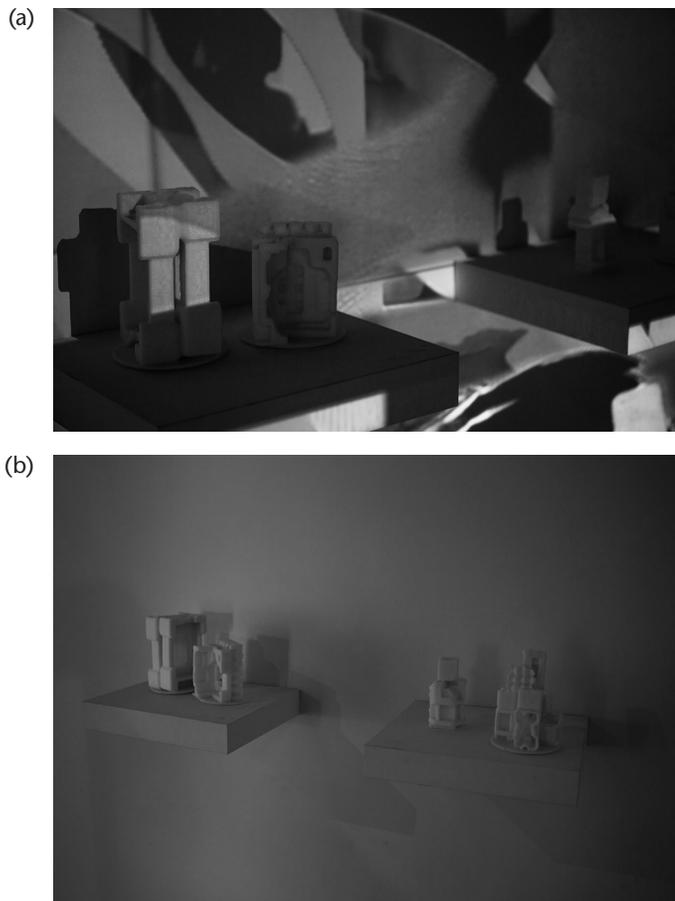


Figure 16.5 (a and b) Darrin Martin, installation shots of *Objects Unknown: Sounds Familiar* (2016) in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia. Photos by Emily Corkery

of the same materials taking place by de Groot in the video as she covered her head, and/or if they were hearing, they could hear how the crinkle, crinkle, crunch, crunch noise to emerge as a result of hands making impact with crumpled paper were echoed in the sounds emanated from de Groot's same haptics. Extending de Groot's work in this way was a bid to achieve a heightened level of tactile engagement; these types of access interventions need to be encouraged as we consider the expansion of the sensorial and haptic activism within our museums and galleries.

I also negotiated for the same method of access with another artist in the exhibition. San Francisco-based artist Darrin Martin included a video entitled *Objects Unknown: Sounds Familiar* (2016), where fragmented, layered, abstract forms were projected onto a wall, moving up and down in a long, thin, vertical strip similar in shape and function to a film strip. I had asked the artist to produce a three-dimensional version of these abstract shapes so that they could be accessible to the touch (see Figure 16.5a and b).

The artist used 3D printing technology to create scans of the objects from collaged foam packing material. These objects were animated digitally and then merged via

analogue video tools, which further abstracted the image and produced sound through the manipulation of electronic frequencies. Mounted on pedestals that also served as speakers, the printed objects vibrated with the same sounds emanating from their projected counterparts.

All of these objects proved very successful as modes of multisensorial engagement in the gallery according to my observations, which were captured during my time sitting in the gallery for two days a week over a period of eight weeks to witness audience reactions first-hand. However, while the engagement was certainly successful in terms of motivating people to touch, I also observed that people did not always know how to touch, or at least, how to ‘appropriately’ touch. In the next section, I discuss the complexities of touching despite its many benefits.

### **Please Do Not Touch (after all)**

During the opening reception of the exhibition on 26 March 2016, many different visitors attended to explore and engage with the show, including adults of various ages and young children. If the opening was anything to judge by, it seemed that the show was going to be a great hit with the audience, as people were quick to pick up mallets in order to make contact with the gongs, and all the other many interactive devices in the exhibition. Visitors young and old were equally captivated by the lights, sounds, and images in the space and enjoyed the new-found freedom to touch the work in a space that typically prohibits such behaviour (see Figure 16.6).

However, after the first week the show had been opened to the public, the objects had already been placed under a great deal of duress after some rough handling. It seemed that once we had provided the public with permission to touch, they were indeed overzealous in their eagerness to engage. It was not too long before serious damage was incurred. As one would expect, the gallery has much higher attendances when it provides free admission, making it



*Figure 16.6* Visitors engaging with Aaron McPeake’s selection of gongs (2007–2010) at the opening reception of *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 26 March 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

more accessible to a more diverse public from various socio-economic backgrounds. This increase in attendance during free admission time means that the gallery staff may not always be able to spend time with each visitor, nor are they able to keep a close watch on each individual. During a particularly busy period, some teenagers were immediately drawn to the tactile objects in the show, especially the gongs. One individual decided to swing from the gongs in Tarzan-like fashion, gripping onto the bronze for support as the thin black rope swayed back and forth suspended from the ceiling. While bronze is a strong material, it wasn't strong enough to support the weight of an adult, and within minutes of this activity, the bronze gong snapped in half. The gallery notified me of the damage, and I informed the artist of the unfortunate news.

The gallery took further action by placing up new signs on the walls providing instruction for how people should engage with the work from now on. Even though I had taken great trouble to prepare labels that also included Braille versions, it seems my participatory directives were not clear enough. In my extended label, I stated: "The bronze bells each have their own clappers (labelled to correspond) and you are welcome to engage with them – please hit, touch and gong!" The San Diego Art Institute created two new labels with very large print in uppercase letters (as if shouting), which stated "DELICATE. PLEASE BE GENTLE" and "DO NOT SWING FROM THE GONGS." These labels got to the point of telling people both what they *should* do (to be gentle) and what they should *not* do (swing from the gongs, as individuals had done before) (see Figure 16.7a and b).

While these new labels were important to protect the gallery, as it did not want to be liable for any further damage to the work, they came across as patronising and less than welcoming to visitors, which was the antithesis of my curatorial vision and objective of the show. In fact, the new labels were quite comical, but also very embarrassing and unprofessional. The gallery was now also providing decidedly mixed messages to its visitors, because while they were encouraged to engage on the one hand, they were also being told to be careful. In some other instances, based on the circumstances and materials of other works in the show, the gallery's visitors were being told not to touch at all.

For example, the gallery informed me that several small works made of bone china intermingled with found and natural materials had been destroyed. Anne Gibbs, from Wales, had provided an installation entitled *Crossing Boundaries* that was a second version based on her original series from 2015. Given that the work was so fragile, I had asked her to create a second iteration of the piece in order for the work to be handled by the public. This was the first time that the artist had allowed her work to be touched by the audience, and so, indeed, the title of her work had a double meaning in that it also crossed a new sensorial threshold. Gibbs' work begged to be touched, as there were many fantastic sensorial qualities embedded into her bone china pieces, ranging from wire to charred pins, coral, coloured threads, and glaze. Unfortunately, during this first week of free admission to the gallery, several people who picked up Gibbs' various pieces accidentally dropped them onto the floor, cracking the delicate forms immediately as they splintered into several pieces. The gallery responded in the same way and put up signage amidst the installation, stating the all-too-familiar, upper-case "PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH" directive (see Figure 16.8a and b).

Again, the gallery made this decision as protection and because they did not want to keep deploying their insurance policy. While some artists were happy to accept the risks of having their works in my show be touched, others were not so flexible and wanted reimbursement for the damage incurred to their work. We had no written contracts with the artists, and so we left ourselves vulnerable to this very unpredictable situation. That was our

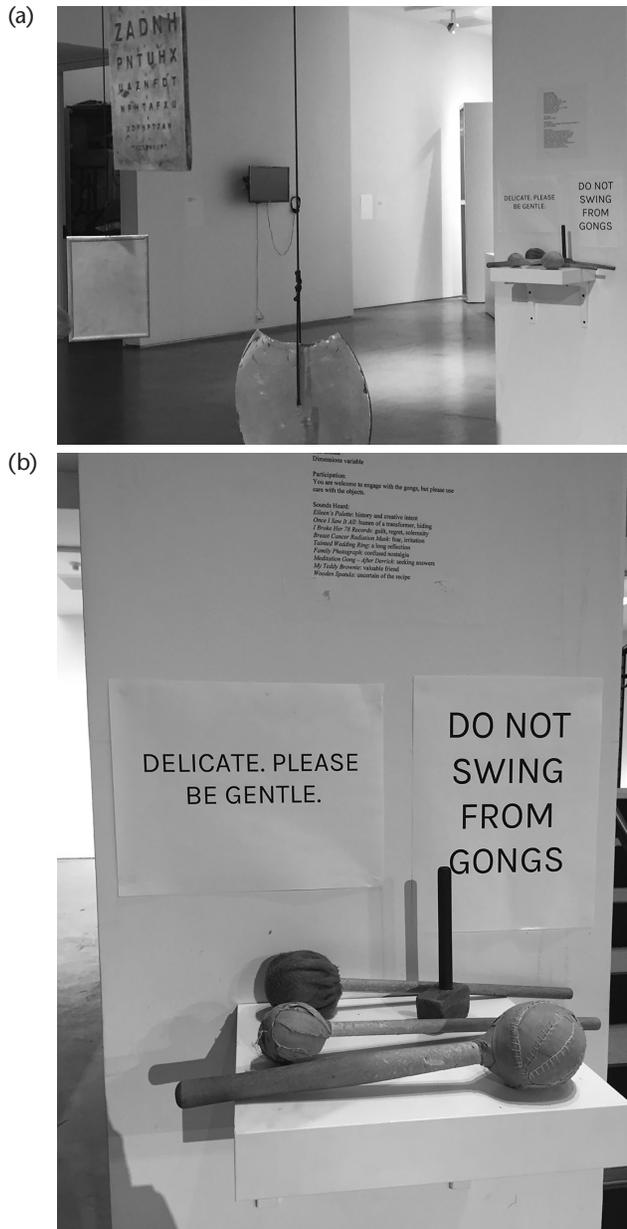


Figure 16.7 (a and b) Installation shots of the signage that accompanied Aaron McPeake's gong installation in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

first mistake. Signs were then put up throughout the entire exhibition to ward off people's irresponsible touching. A sign was even placed at the front desk to the entrance of the gallery space, stating "PLEASE HANDLE ALL OBJECTS CAREFULLY" (see Figure 16.9).

In her article, "Rehabilitating unauthorised touch, or why museum visitors touch the exhibits," Fiona Candlin (2017) writes about how touch authorised and sanctioned by a museum is very different to unauthorised touch. Authorised touch is, of course, much more

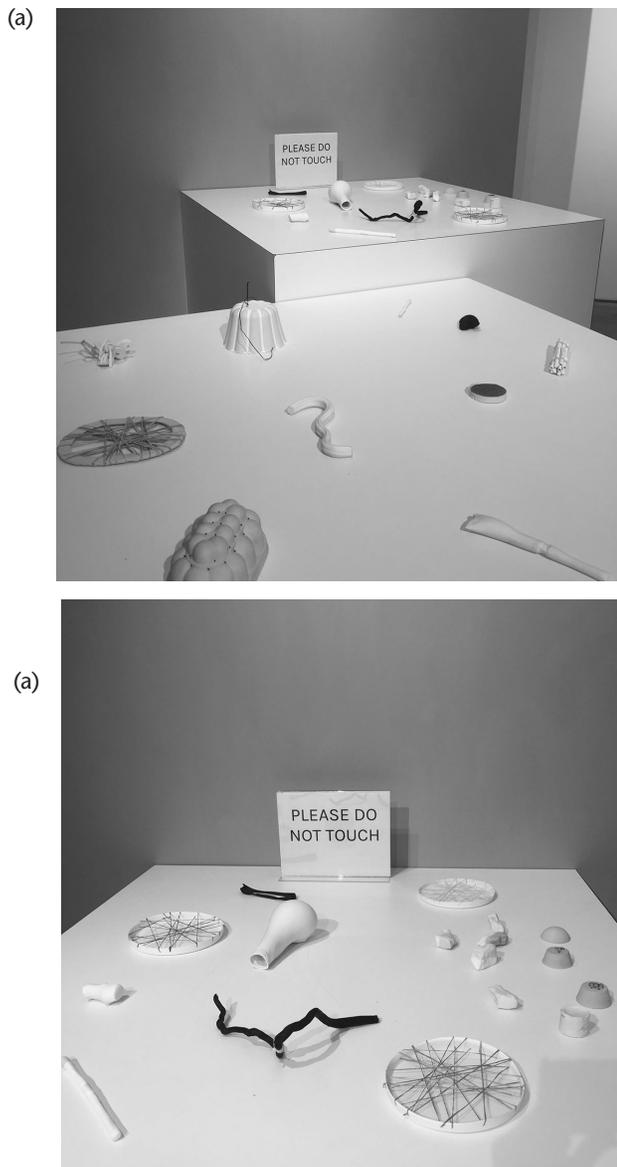


Figure 16.8 (a and b) Installation shots of the “Please Do Not Touch” signage to accompany Anne Gibbs’ work, *Crossing Boundaries* (2016), in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

regulated – for example, through touch tours, which have defined parameters for tactile engagement. On the other hand, as Candlin notes, unauthorised touch is “much less pre-determined” (255). Candlin states that “attending to unauthorised touch therefore widens the scope of enquiry, potentially encompasses sensory experiences that fall outside or exceed the institution’s aims or intentions, and thereby attends to visitors’ choices and agency” (255). Candlin is interested in learning from unauthorised touch as opposed to regulated touch. In the same article, she provides a brief history of touch in the museum, noting that museums



Figure 16.9 Signage at the front entrance of the gallery warning visitors, "Please Handle All Objects Carefully" in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*, San Diego Art Institute, 2016, curated by Amanda Cachia

used to provide cabinets of curiosity that could, in fact, be touched. However, with the massive growth of museums, tactile engagement became unsustainable owing to an inability to maintain a controlled environment to keep a watchful eye over greasy hands and clumsy fingers. Candlin's observations of all the unauthorised touch that she witnessed at the British Museum in London convinced her of the power of touch and how touch provides a richer and even more imaginative experience with an object, but I suggest that unauthorised touch requires a different modality of touch. In other words, when one is unauthorised to touch, that touch is administered through surreptitious means; it must be brief and tentative so as not to draw the attention of a possible nearby security guard and to avoid any damage (although many highly publicised incidents show that this is not always the case when touching work on the sly). In contrast, when given full permission to touch, the execution of touch is flipped into reverse and becomes forceful, purposeful, and uninhibited.

In her book, *Art, Museums, and Touch*, Candlin (2010) explains why touch became a prohibited activity in the gallery. Touching was once a class-based activity because it was only the elite, wealthy classes who were not only given the privilege to touch objects in a museum, but who were also viewed by the museum staff as having the common sense to touch "rationally." Touching by the aristocrat's "social inferiors" was considered "unruly and destructive" (76). Candlin (2010) therefore argues that the "museum's sensory transition was partly a consequence of class difference and an elite perception of working-class touch" (77). Museum conservation protocols also entered into this sensorial restriction, along with the idea that curators were the only experts in object handling. Indeed, Candlin suggests that this superior attitude also translated into the visual realm, where it was assumed that the working class was no better in soliciting rational knowledge from simply looking at a work, let alone touching it. Candlin (2010) states that "once the working class (whose touch had

always been denigrated) gained admittance, touching became associated with damage, a lack of common sense and an absence of justice” (85).

Such claims become very problematic because in the pursuit of justice and access for all – especially in the interests of disabled audiences and people who are blind and/or visually impaired – I suggest that other minority groups can be implicated in relation to class bias. At this intersection of disability and class, the museum must find a means to offer unrestricted and yet authorised access for all these groups, where learning about how to touch is achieved in tandem with developing a lexicon of the experience of touch itself.

Indeed, Candlin’s research on unauthorised touching yielded useful results. Security attendants at the British Museum who were interviewed for their opinions on why so much illicit touching took place, suggested that most visitors did not set out to purposely damage work. Candlin (2010) states, “on the contrary they thought that it was related to poor signage, gallery design, staffing levels, and above all, confusion as to whether the objects were original” (85). This feedback is useful for it also relates to some of the problems evident in *Sweet Gongs Vibrating*. Gallery staff and I belatedly recognised after the exhibition had opened and destruction had already taken place that we had failed to include invigilators in the gallery at all times. These invigilators could keep a watchful eye on visitors and also have conversations with the audience, talking them about how to engage ‘appropriately’ with an artwork. The participatory notes, or as deaf artist and scholar Joseph Grigely (2010) likes to call them, “exhibition prosthetics” (3), that I had incorporated into my exhibition labels were not enough, as people either could not see them or they were not placed well within the overall exhibition design.

Once we recognised the need to have invigilators in the space, the gallery also realised it did not have the resources to maintain an active presence, and so I volunteered to be an invigilator in the gallery two days a week for the duration of the exhibition. I also wanted to experience first-hand how people were engaging with the work, and so I used this as a valuable opportunity to learn more about tactile interaction in a contemporary art gallery. I noticed that people often did not read any of the labels and just intuitively tried to interact with the work. Most of the time, people seemed to understand what was expected of them. At other times, there was some rough handling, and I stepped in and chatted with them about the best way to engage with the work to reap an anticipated response intended by the artist. While some works in the show could withstand rough handling, others needed to be treated much more carefully. Consequently, some visitors failed to exercise dexterity in their handling, as the exhibition demanded that the visitors switch from gentle-to-rough-to-gentle as they circled the room with their exploratory fingers. Based on my observations, I understood the need for more education on the practice of touch within an exhibition space, and saw that people can behave in all kinds of unexpected ways when we give them full permission to touch.

During my time observing the public, I began to call into question the very nature of so-called appropriate touching in a gallery. While Candlin (2010) explained that the historic context for the nature of touching was based on class distinctions, I began to ask other questions about touch. How should we be touching in museums anyway? Is the right way to touch only dictated by the museum, the artist, and/or the materials of the work? Can any way to touch become the right way? Can the contemporary art gallery ever exist in a space where damage is of no concern? While these utopian questions may be very difficult to entertain in a museum containing older works in its permanent collection, I believe that a contemporary art gallery space has more potential and flexibility for experimentation with these ideas.

It is true that some works are simply just more amenable and ideal for rough handling than others, and that it would surely be logical for the curator to include only those works and steer

clear of all fragile pieces so as to avoid risky confusion. However, this would exclude a huge portion of frail objects from tactile interaction with the visitor, and this seems a great shame. What is critical within this field of questions is that touch, however implemented, must be deployed in a way in order for the visitor to gain maximum benefit of the work itself. Ostensible ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ modes of touching work are perhaps not how the lexicon or even the politics should be approached. Instead, it seems more important to think about the object first for its radical potential to educate, translate, and promote understanding. This, however, is tricky as it means that the curator and the artist must undertake more meaningful conversations to ensure that the artist’s work is not being compromised while at the same time serving the needs of an audience who wish to revel in the potential of multisensorial engagement.

These mixed outcomes from *Sweet Gongs Vibrating* gave me the opportunity to develop a working list of criteria or guidelines that I would implement for future exhibitions of this nature. To begin, clearly it is important for the curator, artist(s), and venue to work collaboratively on all access components from the ground up. Other criteria include the importance of timing: for instance, all accessible components should be implemented well in advance of an exhibition opening – three months is ideal. Museums and galleries should also incorporate sufficient funds in the budget for all appropriate access components as a critical part of the overall enterprise, including funds for the education of tactile engagement, even if that means a panel on questioning what so-called ‘appropriate’ engagement means in each and every context. These funds could include payment of invigilators, or if funds are sparse, then perhaps touch tours can be arranged for a designated time each day under staff supervision. The curator should also have in-depth conversations with the artists about the level of tactile engagement in the exhibition and ensure that these specifics are laid out in contract form.

I am convinced that the labels or ‘exhibition prosthetics’ I developed, which provided dialogical directives on how to engage with the exhibition such as how to engage with the gongs, should not be abandoned completely. While they proved insufficient on their own as a means to successfully elicit the intended (or even unintended) response to a work through tactile means, I believe they are an important mode for the artist and curator to have a partial conversation with the visitor in their physical absence, particularly if the artists contribute to the text on the labels. In future, I would also think about how these directives can be offered in alternative formats so that they are made more obvious but also just as importantly, more accessible beyond merely the written format. If these labels as “exhibition prosthetics” are meant to be dialogical in nature, then surely this dialogue can be viewed and heard in multiple formats as well.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have suggested that a fuller spectrum of audience members can access objects in a museum or gallery that may not have been available to them previously, owing to conventional “PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH” policies. Being able to engage in encounters of tactility in a museum gives the disabled and non-disabled visitors a new advantage, where they are empowered through haptic aesthetics and do need not to rely on discursive or representational regimes in art history to validate or sanction either their presence or experience in the museum. Importantly, the tactile realm, while empowering and benefitting a disabled audience, is also equally accessible to non-disabled visitors as well, including visitors from various socio-economic backgrounds and class categories. In sum, touch has the potential to become a powerful egalitarian modality if museums provide the resources to educate its public on how tactility can effectively be utilised.

Despite my temporary disappointment that emerged as a result of poor planning and unanticipated reactions from the audience that led to restrictions on tactile engagement, *Sweet Gongs Vibrating* proved generative in how to consider intersectional axes of difference within a multisensorial contemporary gallery environment. How does class and/or disability impact multisensorial exhibition engagement? What is required of the museum and the artist in order to meet the demands of a diverse audience from multiple axes of differences when touch is involved? How should we educate on the lexicon of touch and what are the politics of sensorial access? The museum and its staff can do much to develop these lines of enquiry further so that museums and galleries can ultimately shift the sensorial regime once again into the next century and beyond. If the artist and curator are prepared to imaginatively engage with the work of access, then conditions of narrow standardisation will eventually not only be disrupted as they transform curatorial practice and the museum and gallery experience for the visitor, but vital new approaches to art-making and thinking will thrive.

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