ArtsBuild Ontario Learning Series Webinar:
Design for Public Spaces Advanced: How Can Creative Spaces Go Beyond the Standard?
Tuesday March 12th 2019

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>> THEA KURDI: (Reference Slide 1) Welcome, everyone, to the webinar Design for Public Spaces Advanced: How Can Creative Spaces Go Beyond the Standard?

This is the third webinar in the ArtsBuild Ontario's accessibility series. We want to thank all of you for being able to attend today. My name is Thea Kurdi, and I am the vice president of a company called DesignABLE Environments, and I've been an accessibility design strategist for the last 18 years. I will be your host today, again, for this webinar. My company is currently working with ArtsBuild Ontario as consultants on both this amazing webinar series and on the creation of a fabulous toolkit to support accessibility in creative spaces.

We are delighted to have join us today with two feature presenters to help us with the topic, How can Creative Spaces Go Beyond the Standard? The first presenter will be Lorene Casiez, who is an accessibility and wellness practice lead at Human Space, and Dave Holland, who is the head of Royal Ontario Museum's Creative as our guests.

(Reference Slide 2) We will hand things over to them in just a minute, but we need to cover a few housekeeping items before we get started. So the first part is that you can hear us, but we can't hear you. Your microphones have been disabled for the webinar, but we hope you can hear us through your speakers or headphones. You can adjust the sound by clicking on the speaker icon at the top of the meeting window.

The second thing is that we're offering closed captioning through the webinar -- for the webinar today, and the closed captioning will appear, as you can see, at the bottom of the meeting room screen. It's called the Caption Stream Pod. You, as the participant, can change the font or size or color of that text as you need.

Would a participant please confirm, by typing in the chat box, which is in the bottom right corner of the screen, that they can see the closed captioning at the bottom of our meeting room. Excellent, I see several people here writing "yes." That's perfect. Thank you so much.

A record -- a recording of the closed captioning will be sent to participants following the webinar and made available on the ArtsBuild website.

So there are three just quick last things before we get started with the rest of the presentation. The first one being that we will be recording this

entire session, and a link will be emailed to every one of the participants following the webinar.

The second, also very important, we will be emailing to you a quick survey after the webinar. We ask that you complete the survey so that ArtsBuild Ontario can continue to improve their Learning Series for creative spaces.

And the third, we will have roughly ten minutes at the end to answer your questions, so we'll be keeping our presenters to about 20, 25 minutes each so that we have time to do that.

During the question period, please use the chat box in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen to type in your questions, and we will get to as many of them as possible in that time period.

Unfortunately, the chat box function at the bottom right does not have -- is not accessible to the screen readers, so if you're using a screen reader and would like to ask a question, please email those, instead, to erin@artsbuildontario.ca, and I think maybe Erin can copy and paste that into the chat box if people need it. It's e-r-i n@artsbuildontario.ca, and we will include those questions during the Q&A period.

(Reference Slide 3) So what is our agenda today? We're going to cover very briefly about the Learning Series, we'll do a quick recap on the previous seminars that we've held, we'll do two presentations from Lorene and Dave, and we'll have a question period, as mentioned.

(Reference Slide 4) So first, about the Learning Series. In case you haven't heard about ArtsBuild Ontario, they are a non-profit arts service organization that provides programs and learning opportunities that help

make Ontario's creative spaces more sustainable. One of their programs is called The Learning Series, which is a series of webinars, workshops, and resources that support their core programs.

This is the third of the six webinars in the Learning Series that will focus on accessibility. The previous two will be available on the ArtsBuild Ontario website.

These webinars will focus on accessibility and creative spaces based on the Design for Public Spaces Standard, which is part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, also known as the AODA legislation. Each of these webinars will explain how creative spaces need to meet accessible build standards and explore ways creative space comes go beyond the standards, taking into account both physical accessibility and experiential accessibility.

The webinars will be supported by a toolkit for creative spaces around the topic of accessibility, which will be released in the spring of this year, 2019. ArtsBuild Ontario would like to thank its Accessibility Advisory Committee for informing the webinar topics, speakers, and upcoming toolkit for creative spaces in Ontario.

(Reference Slide 5) So let's just do quickly a recap from our first seminar or last webinars so that you can see the basic information. Of course, these webinars are building from this information.

So the first question we asked was what is disability? Considering people with disabilities are the minority of everyone. Either everyone has a disability or knows someone with a disability or will have a disability through accident, illness, or aging.

(Reference Slide 6) The other thing we talked about was understanding the AODA and how it relates to the law, so the AODA, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, has a goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025. The whole principle of the legislation was to focus on equality, dignity, and respect.

There are five areas of requirements that are all grouped together under the Integrated Accessibility Standard. The first is the customer service, the second is information and communication, the third is employment, the fourth is transportation, and the fifth is the design of public spaces.

(Reference Slide 7) So as we apply the AODA, customer service requirements include staff training. The information and communication part of the standard needs to have alternative formats available upon request, including things like large print text or Braille. The employment part of the legislation requires making your hiring practices accessible.

(Reference Slide 8) And the design of public spaces, which is part of what we're focusing on here with the webinars, mostly focuses on exterior spaces. For most buildings, that means talking about any exterior paths of travel you may have, your outdoor public eating areas, your outdoor play spaces, if you have some, and both the public use eating areas and the play spaces do require some public consultation, which is very easy to do, shouldn't be a problem. The accessible parking has two different types or sizes, Type A, which is a van size and marked as van parking, although both types of cars can use it, and Type B, which is a car-sized accessible parking space. The only three elements that stray to inside the building are the

service counters, the Fixed Queuing Guides, if you have any, and the waiting areas, which require 3% of the waiting -- seating area to be accessible.

(Reference Slide 9) The Ontario Building Code also applies but has limited accessibility requirements, mostly focusing on wheelchair users, so the question was, can we build a building that fully complies with the OBC and still have it be fully accessible? Well, as I mentioned, because it mostly focuses on wheelchair users, the answer is no, and it doesn't solve the range of abilities people have over the course of their lives.

(Reference Slide 10) So we provided additional resources for you to help you achieve what's required under the hierarchy of our laws. What most people don't understand is that the Ontario Human Rights Code prevails over the OBC and the AODA, so you could be compliant with the OBC and AODA but still not have met the equality required for access to buildings under the Human Rights Code.

We also had a second presenter on that first seminar, Sage Lovell, who discussed the deaf culture in creative spaces. It was certainly worth watching the first seminar to see Sage's amazing presentation, and I think Erin will be providing [a link in the chat window](#) so that you can find that easily after this presentation is over.

The second webinar, which was called the Design of Public Spaces 101, Where do Creative Spaces Start? we had a great conversation about intersectionality and accessibility with another fabulous presenter, Jay Pitter. Sorry, my speaker's cutting in and out here.

(Reference Slide 11) The Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility has lots of different ways that -- for people to contact them if they're looking for more detailed information about specifically the AODA and how it applies, so in case you're looking for information, please feel free to [contact them]. This slide shows their website, a telephone number, their Twitter account, their Facebook page, their YouTube contact information, and their email address. If you can't see the slide, please let us know, and we'll provide that in an accessible alternative for you.

(Reference Slide 12) So let's get started with introduction to our wonderful presenters. Our first presenter is Lorene Casiez, who is the accessibility leader at Human Space. Lorene shapes the environment to enhance health and well-being for all users. She believes good design has universal design and the inclusive design process as its foundation. Wow, couldn't agree more. Lorene works with interdisciplinary teams on large design projects and has led complex audits, created Accessible Design Guidelines, and facilitated community engagements as both practice lead and instructor at OCAD U. Lorene impresses on designers and other professionals that creating inclusive spaces is at once a great responsibility and a real opportunity for creativity.

(Reference Slide 13) Our second fabulous presenter today is Dave Hollands. Dave is a licensed architect and the head Creative at the Royal Ontario Museum, responsible for in-house workgroup, who designs special exhibitions, multimedia, and space alterations. Space -- Dave is an active member of the museum's Inclusive Advisory Group, devoted to making the museum a place for everyone.

Prior to the ROM, Dave worked for 20 years with seers and Russell Architects, specialists in museum planning and design for clients throughout Canada and the USA. Presently, the focus of Dave's team at the ROM is the development of major exhibitions designed to engage and inform diverse audiences. Dave is frequently a presenter and panelist on the subject of accessible design in the museum setting.

(Reference Slide 14) So without further ado, let's get to Lorene, who's going to kick us off until about 12:25 or 12:30, depending on how the time goes, and then we'll move on to Dave's presentation. I'll hand it over to you, Lorene.

>> LORENE CASIEZ: Hi, Thea. Can everyone hear me?

>> THEA KURDI: Yes, we can hear you.

>> LORENE CASIEZ: (Reference Slide 15) Thanks for the introduction. I'm excited to be here with all of you, as an associate at Quadrangle and the Accessibility and Wellness Practice Lead at Human Space, I'm in a great position to influence the culture and studio practice.

(Reference Slide 16) For those of you who may not know, Human Space is a division at Quadrangle which is a 200-plus Architecture firm in Toronto. At Human Space, our vision is to elevate the human experience through built environments that embody inclusivity, resilience, and connectivity. Human Space is a collaborative of accessibility, sustainable, and wellness specialists working with city builders and placemakers to create spaces for all people.

(Reference Slide 17) As a consulting practice, we have the opportunity to collaborate and -- collaborate and consult on various projects with other

leading architecture firms. Above is a sample of recent projects we have consulted on. On the top left you'll see the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Center at Ryerson University, which shows a 7 story podium, rooftop terrace, and on the top right is the Milton District Hospital which shows the new reception space and accessible counter portion that integrates a forward approach for a person using a mobility device. And on the top -- sorry, on the bottom right, various sports venues that were built for the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games in Toronto. This image shows an upper seating view of the Milton Veladrome.

(Reference Slide 18) When I was approached to be a speaker for this webinar, I was asked to provide design examples of spaces that are exemplars of design excellence in accessibility. To think about, one, what accessible design is beyond the provision of physical accessibility into a space, and two, how to create a space that promotes accessibility. It forced me to think really hard about design examples to share with you, and just a little spoiler alert, we still have some work to do in this area; however, to help reframe the discussion, I have two key goals for this webinar. One is to share some key accessible design strategies, and two, to highlight some gaps about design and processes to create accessible spaces.

(Reference Slide 19) Before I begin, I just want to touch briefly upon some common assumptions and common practices often that I hear from my clients around disability and legislation.

(Reference Slide 20) When I think about my day-to-day practice, a common assumption is that we've begun to dispel -- sorry -- excuse me -- that we've begun to dispel through a series of these webinars is when we

design to the AODA, design of public spaces, and the BOC, we have created a built an environment that is, quote, unquote, accessible. This slide shows the Human Rights Code, AODA, and the OBC. As independent pillars, these pieces of legislations and regulations work together to promote quality of opportunity and the removal and prevention of barriers; however, despite the intent, we know that there's much more that can be developed and implemented within our environment to make it more usable and accessible for people.

(Reference Slide 21) And part of that leads into the second common assumption in that accessible design is about design spaces for persons using a wheelchair, and as a result, when you design for accessibility, you meet everyone's needs; however, I imagine within this audience that most of us are aware of the dynamics of the human body and that there are a range of abilities and disabilities that impact our interactions with the built environment. From physical mobility, strength, and cognition, and this is the perspective accessibility that I bring to my design practice.

(Reference Slide 22) As a result, a common practice in accessible design is that, one, people tend to prioritize space requirements for people using disability devices based on the minimum dimensions in the Ontario Building Code, and two, as a result from this perspective, the appetite in the market for many clients is typically limited to spatial design, and additional design strategies related to technology to enhance spaces for people who are blind or low vision or for those who are deaf or hard of hearing are less likely to be integrated into the project. So in my practice, there's a push to recognize the broader scope around accessibility and

disability and to push design for people and thinking about the usability of space.

(Reference Slide 23) Creative spaces. So when we and I -- and the team and I start thinking about creative spaces, I recognize that not all spaces are dedicated creative and performance-based, and I imagine for organizations without a dedicated space, it becomes critical to identify spaces that have the potential to become a creative space that can welcome as many people with a range of abilities and disabilities.

(Reference Slide 24) Creative spaces are everywhere. Regardless of whether space is an established or in a fixed environment for creative display or flexible space that can be transformed for a pop-up opportunity, there remains spacing requirements that need to be in place to support an accessible environment. In this particular project, designing for physical accessibility and visual placemaking and wayfinding the space was the catalyst of transforming the place into a mini hub. So this photo shows an interior of the new entrance at 100 Broadview. It showcases a set of stairs and a bright orange ramp that have become the focal point of the space.

(Reference Slide 25) 100 Broadview was an unremarkable storage facility. The building suffered on the lack of identity and access. Entry from the street led directly to a set of stairs to either go up and down, so in these four images here, we see the street access that leads into a lobby that had a set of stairs and into a facility that really didn't have much in terms of identity or -- or wayfinding.

(Reference Slide 26) So a significant renovation. We cut away the first floor slab opening the floor space to open up a lower level and celebrate

access into the space with a brightly colored ramp that connected the street and enhancing the physical access of the space. So this is another image from another angle showing the entry into 100 Broadview.

(Reference Slide 27) We introduced large super graphics for wayfinding and shared hallways, which created a distinctive brand for the building and served as wayfinding and placemaking within the building amongst the different levels. In this image, the color red was used to identify the second level. The red band was mid-height, and leads people to desired areas within the floor. The large international symbol of access painted on the door is used to show the location of the accessible washroom facilities.

(Reference Slide 28) This slide is another example of the use of color and supergraphics, so on the third floor there's the blue color, and on the ground floor, orange was used to identify that location.

(Reference Slide 29) With this major renovation, 100 Broadview for a number of years served as the site for the annual fundraiser for the StopGap. The development of this space prioritized access and identity and supported the development of the space into a hub for after-hour events. The image here shows a slide of the same space of an office lounge turned into a party lounge for the Ramp Up event.

(Reference Slide 30) The redevelopment of 100 Broadview and integration of accessible features created a brand identity for the building, while opening up its potential to serve as a community hub and a pop-up space event. To summarize some of the key features and the idea that creative spaces can be everywhere was the provision of access into and

throughout the building, the provision of accessible washroom facilities, fixtures, and elements, and a real focus on ease of wayfinding.

(Reference Slide 31) Creative spaces are for the community. Within Quadrangle's work at the deaf Culture Centre, the focus of this project was around designing for the deaf community and providing an office and event space that could act as a community hub. A key focus on the project was to think about the usability of the space, and this is a great example of designing beyond minimum codes, thinking about designing for the community and thinking about what makes a space usable and for whom.

(Reference Slide 32) I won't spend too much time on this project, as it was presented earlier in the webinar series, but what I'd like to share with you are some of the highlights during the design process and some of the guiding principles for the project. Keep in mind that the design was built before the formalization of Deaf Space Principles, formalized by architect Hansel Baum and his work through the Gallaudet University, post-secondary institution in Washington, D.C.; however, some of the principles used at the Deaf Culture Center align with Deaf Space Principles.

In the early 2000s, Quadrangle was hired to design and started with a Charrette process to understand how to best design the space. Through consultation and discussion, the team identified key priorities, which included creating open visual fields and sight lines to support visual communication, the strategic use of mirrors, spaces designed around supporting conversational circles, and interior design strategies to minimize eye strain and the integration of ledges to place items so hands can communicate freely.

The image on the right shows the kitchen space with an island for communal gathering space, while the picture on the left shows a meeting room with large spans of glass to maintain visual speeds.

Tapping into the historical field of the district where it's located, the interior design strategy grows from the brick and timber beams and rust-colored columns, leaving itself to a more neutral color palette.

(Reference Slide 33) The final design created about 4,000 square feet with movable walls and screens on the main floor that creatde an exhibition space that could be easily transformed into rooms for parties and events. A kitchen where classes could be taught and a greeting tabled area to large groups of visitors.

Design Charrettes allowed for tailored design for the Deaf Culture Centre and the deaf community, prioritizing open space and sight lines which aligning with a flexible space that the community at large could engage in by integrating flexible spaces and open programming opportunities.

A summary of features for this particular project was making the best use of design Charrettes, creating and balancing open sight lines and spaces, the idea of using flexible spaces, opening programming, and the alignment with Deaf Space Principles.

(Reference Slide 34) This last project I'd like to share with you is the idea that creative spaces are changing. In this project, the OCAD University, a post-secondary institution rooted in the arts and design, has developed a new studio office space called OCAD U CO, designed to support collaborative, innovative, and creative work.

(Reference Slide 35) OCAD U CO's goal through their studio styled environment is to encourage learning through intensive teamwork in a maker culture. The collaboration space can bring up to 200 people and is well suited to host social engagements, creative showcases or corporate meetings. Our interior design team worked with OCAD's principals universal design that seamlessly integrates a wide range of abilities and supported the flexibility of the program and space. A big priority was around balancing open and private spaces, attenuating sound, and creating user controllable spaces.

As we -- as the designer, one thing I'm constantly discovering is the idea of giving users the idea to customize their space as one of the most impactful things that we can do to be able to design for the diversity of abilities that people have.

(Reference Slide 36) Some strategic decisions that our interior designers made on the project included providing controllable window coverings to mitigate the impact of glare, creating smaller flexible movable furniture between flex -- furniture to flex between programs, and ways to mitigate sound through integrating acoustical wall coverings, acoustical spray on the ceilings, and selective soft seating. It also integrated smaller moments through collaboration for seating in the hallways and smaller meeting rooms. Another hallmark of the project is the strategic use of color and space to help with placemaking and wayfinding, creating opportunities for support, focused discussion, and quiet moments in reflection. Too often public spaces are loud and busy spaces that can be overwhelming and limit the time one can engage in the space. By

providing quieter focus spaces, people can recharge and regain the opportunity to engage. So in the image above, we can see that there's the seating nooks in the hallway as well as smaller breakout rooms shown on the right.

(Reference Slide 37) In this image, there's also the image of the elevator lobby, and here we begin to see also the addition -- we continue to see the bright uses of color to highlight the elevator doors, the correlation between the elevator and the immediate placement of the reception desk, and varied counter surface heights.

(Reference Slide 38) So the idea of creative spaces are changing, for this particular project we continued to use the strategic use of color, we managed and balanced the idea of spatial requirements and the challenges between open spaces for wayfinding and sound attenuation, the idea of central reception, the idea of people power, providing the reception counter up front and providing staff to redirect people to navigate the spaces, to advise of any accessible features, opportunities for quiet moments, and focused opportunities.

Another thing in this project, which is hard to highlight, is the idea of the ease of provision of power sources and Wi-Fi to allow people to use technology that they may have with them.

(Reference Slide 39) So to wrap up, I hope you've enjoyed a glimpse into a few spaces that was built around creating accessible and usable spaces.

(Reference Slide 40) I will be the first to admit it's hard to put one project to showcase all the desirable accessible features, and some of it is

based -- and some of it based around the current understanding and perceived market type for accessible spaces. As we continue to evolve and develop new spaces, Human Space as a practice recognizes that designing for accessibility needs a broader scope and definition. Much focus still remains on physical accessibility and physical disabilities, basic spatial requirements, and what else, so the idea that special requirements tend to be discussed and focused on, as it's addressed in existing regulations and municipal guidelines, but we know that there's much more to be done. Recognizing the idea that opportunities are everywhere for creative spaces. Some of the design elements shown in 100 Broadview helped launch that public space into a building and a mini hub. What we're excited and enriched about is in the opportunities we have to engage with the community, the Deaf Culture Centre was an example of that in the start. We're also working towards recognizing that changing requirements are not as well documented and thinking about some of the things that we've started to implement, as shown in the OCAD U project begins to push our design beyond mobility.

We're going through an exciting time right now, and we're constantly involved in ongoing evaluation in our design processes. We're always aiming to do better, and I would welcome the ongoing dialogue about how to create better spaces. (Reference Slide 41 and 42) Thank you.

>> THEA KURDI: Thank you very much, Lorene. That was an excellent presentation full of some really stunning graphics and some really important ideas. I think particularly, your comments about consulting with people with disabilities, they have the lived experience is important, the

fact that this is evolving, the fact that functional programming is really important to get those space impacts, and making sure budgets include accessibility requirements, all integral to successful design. Thanks again.

I'm going to turn now to David, who's going to be talking to us about his experience with accessibility and the ROM. Go ahead, David.

(Reference Slide 43) >> DAVE HOLLANDS: Good afternoon. So this is our iconic building in downtown Toronto, and an internal museum team worked with architectural to shape the accessible features of the design of this addition, the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal edition and its energetic look was to suggest the constantly changing experience inside, big windows that display dinosaurs, you can see in the day and at night meant to really say neat stuff inside, come on in, and it was also meant to break away from that daunting fortress feeling created by many traditional museum fronts with large staircases that give off the message, maybe this space is not meant for me. And we are currently working with an architect to add gardens and other amenities to the front to make that sense of welcome even stronger and to meet the new design of public spaces standard.

So thank you so much for inviting me to join you today. I'm just having a little trouble advancing to the next slide. There we go. Thank you.

(Reference Slide 44) It's a topic I really enjoy about how the Royal Ontario Museum, as many of you know as the ROM, strives to go beyond in the area of access and inclusion, and we use the word "strive" because we know it's a never-ending, never-perfect process. And so what follows is my rather personal view as a result of working and thinking about this at the ROM for almost 20 years.

(Reference Slide 45) So I'd like to begin with the present state of access at the ROM and then go over the main steps that the museum took to get us to here. As one might expect on the subject of design for inclusive space, there's as much about people in this story as there is about design.

In this picture you see one of our fairly recent programs, sign language interpretation of one of our volunteer-conducted gallery highlights tours, and compared to 15 years ago, this is now a very usual part of what the museum offers its visitors.

(Reference Slide 46) Here's a list of the accessible services currently available at the ROM, and I may have left a few out, and while I won't read out the list, I hope its range gives the sense that we're hoping to serve many types of visitors, and we know there's also more work to do to improve and build on this, so I'll just pick out one as an example that there's free admission for attendants, so through the existing programs, access to entertainment, someone can show their membership card in that program, but if you simply show up at our front desk and identify that you have an attendant with you, then that person is admitted free of charge.

So going back to before the access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was initiated in 2005, the ROM set out to find out what would be mandated by it ahead of time so it could begin advance work of meeting or exceeding the requirements, and the initial work focused on simply barriers to mobility. By working closely with the architects of our addition and the renovations, and the ROM Access Plan that emerged was to use the fact that there was a 20-year rollout period of the AODA to improve

access, ultimately, for a much more diverse range of visitor needs. This work was initiated by a few champions at the museum, and I'm going to take a moment to give a real shout out to them. They're a couple of my heroes. So next.

(Reference Slide 47 and 48) This is a photo of former ROM board member, Christine Karcza, who's an accessibility consultant and one of the advisors on the ArtsBuild Ontario program. And before the legislation was enacted, Christine introduced a watershed moment into a ROM Board of Trustees meeting. Christine, who among other things, has been a bank executive, adventure tourist, a dance performer, is also someone who walks with the help of two canes and uses an electric scooter. So in the middle of this landmark meeting, we were in the middle of also reimagining the ROM's buildings and also the visitor experience with it, the ROM Renaissance Project, Christine challenged her board members about thinking to go way beyond the basic building code to imagine a world-class inclusive experience for people with disabilities. And Christine's can-do attitude, as any of you who know her, is very infectious and the ROM board embraced the idea and started on a long path with initiatives top down in the organization.

(Reference Slide 49) This is a photo of the head of Visitor Experience, Cheryl Blackman, later assistant Vice President of Audience Development, and now in-charge of all of Toronto City museums, Cheryl took up the inclusive charge and worked passionately and energetically to frame how this work could be done. She had staff, volunteers, and donor community members in this inclusive idea.

(Reference Slide 50) Listed here are highlights of that work. Cheryl helped make the case for financial support, created two full-time staff positions for inclusion work, set up and ran an Accessibility Advisory Committee with people of wide range of abilities and life experiences. She ensured that budget money for accessible features were built into every major exhibition at the ROM, and she set the path for the ROM Community Access Network which has grown to over 100 partnerships with external groups and organizations and through whom we give out 100,000 free passes distributed through those organizations each year. As exclusion takes many forms, this program works to ensure that financial means do not stand in the way of a visit to the museum.

(Reference Slide 51) So I highlight these two people because it is hard work to figure out how to be genuinely inclusive. It's easy to see it as worth doing, and it's really a very complicated business with immeasurable amounts of learning and a lot of advocacy, so to have a champion or two to evolve our organization is essential to this work. Their legacy is now that there are many others who are carrying out the inclusion agenda at the ROM.

They help to evolve the museum's culture from empathy to understanding to doing, so there you see this kind of pathway spelled out in just a few words. Empathy meant finding out how the museum had been excluding many kinds of visitors by creating barriers to their experience. Understanding meant working together with them to find out what kinds of spaces and experiences could begin to include them. So this is a path for any organization thinking of working to become more

inclusive. I would say it begins with simply caring enough about the idea and then bringing others along with you and being tremendously open to learning and trying things along the way, the doing part. It's never perfect, as I said before, and it's never finished. And it's important to remember that as you enlist others to help, each may not be in the same place along this learning path that you are, so with luck, you will find the ones who are actually well ahead of you. In many instances, we found this in people who identified as having disabilities.

(Reference Slide 52) And so this brings me to collaboration. As a designer, one is trained as a problem solver, solving for a diverse audience means going beyond one's bias in thinking what our visitors are like and going beyond to find out and invite their contribution.

(Reference Slide 53) So what is the mind-set for collaboration with our diverse audience? How should the ROM think about them? Recently author Kat Holmes who has worked on inclusive design for companies such as Google and Microsoft, in her new book "Mismatch," declares how all people have limitations, and people at ROM have been working on encouraging people to see ability before disability, to look for contribution and participation from all kinds of potential visitors. A symbol of this way of thinking are the pictograms of people that we developed for our building signs. All the figures in the set are just like the active-looking figure with the wheelchair, and it's the same symbol used at the head of this webinar. It's the universal symbol for access used by the Museum of Modern Art, and many of you are familiar with the other active one that you saw in Lorene's presentation. To us the person looked able, like everyone, only

with wheels, so we took this mindset about ability and we just started to meet with visitors of all kinds of abilities to find out what their museum visits are like.

(Reference Slide 54) Some of the first people we learned from had actually filed complaints about their museum experience. This man, blind from birth -- I call him Jay -- visits the museum on his own and was often frustrated during his visits to the museum. As a designer, I still find it helpful to keep his comments in mind. We started a committee of individuals of all abilities who were from outside of the museum staff, members of what came to be known as the ROM Diversity & Inclusion Committee, committed to two year terms and met several times a year. We would create plans for exhibitions to get to know each other and problem solve together, and we've been learning like this for about 15 years. So here's a man who asked us, perhaps I don't want to wonder around the entire museum for a tactile experience, so can you help me find out what an armchair experience might be like.

(Reference Slide 55) On the other hand, here's a man who we met who became blind at an early age, and for him a museum visit was actually a social experience with his parents and siblings, and moving all around the galleries was a positive. This immediately reinforced for me the experience visiting the museum as a blind or visually impaired person could vary quite a lot from person to person, and honestly, as a designer, it's easier from our design perspective to lump people together into some homogeneous notion of blind persons. Participants in the ROM Diversity and Inclusion Committee often spoke freely about their own experiences and shared

ideas, but we're careful to point out that their ideas might not work for all persons who shared their disability or for persons with other different disabilities, and I have to tell you, this is terrible news for designers who would like a simple set of standards to work from, but it gave us a great starting point to get going anyway.

(Reference Slide 56) This young man was born deaf and prefers ASL to other forms of communication. He says, when I visit the museum with friends who sign with me, we often feel there's not enough room in the exhibitions. Our personal space is large, and so here's somebody who's articulate, vigorous, and very passionate when signing. His need for physical space in exhibitions was clear and heartfelt and an unexpected learning for me as an exhibition designer.

(Reference Slide 57) This man is always in my mind when we're designing exhibitions. He said I'm pretty good at manoeuvring my large scooter through narrow parts of the exhibits, but I wish I could always pass right through instead of having to back up or turn around, which is hazardous to other people, and he said he felt embarrassed having to navigate that way, so he's always in my mind when we're designing exhibitions, particularly since we're trying to cram so much into our galleries, and he had the really telling idea to create a film for us one day of him going through the museum by mounting a dashboard camera on his head, and watching that video, it's easy for all of us to see how much space matters for him to have a good visit.

(Reference Slide 58) This young woman has often helped us to decide among various graphic design options for labels and texts and where to

place them. She said, I have more success reading labels with high contrast that I can get close to or that I can actually physically move them closer to my face or zoom in on, and I particularly have trouble seeing past the glare on glass display cases.

(Reference Slide 59) So meet Alexis, one of our other inclusion and diversity advisors. Here she is on our website, and she talks about her personal experiences being far more a matter than just getting around and has helped us really consider how we place things and what their size and contrasts are and a lot of other issues that we've been wrestling with, but we can look at them through the lens of her personal experience.

All the others who have participated on the inclusion initiatives helped to form a group of what we would call personae, like Alexis, whose ideas and experiences continue to form the ideas of ROM staff who design things at the museum. They're multicultural people, and what we've learned through dialogue with them is a useful checklist when we ask ourselves if our designs might be including them or excluding them, and I'd like to finish with four examples from our galleries and exhibitions.

(Reference Slide 60) So designing with a personae of known people is one technique used in accessible design but many other creative fields in processes like design thinking. And designing for median characteristics of our visitors actually turns out to exclude many people, so that's where we really start to think about our visitors with very particular needs and call them designing for the edge. Designing for a few who are outside average often has spinoff benefits for all other users.

(Reference Slide 61) Here is an example. The design task was to develop a multilayer role playing game to appreciate what it takes to conduct mining in a sustainable way for the environment, for the people living near or working in mines, for the companies seeking to profit from them. At the time, when we were looking around for the kind of touchscreens we wanted, there was only a really kind of thick one that really affected the ergonomics of how someone using a wheelchair could roll up and use it. So Alexis worked with us in our mock-ups of the gaming table to make it work for wheelchair users and for shorter people.

(Reference Slide 62) Here we see the final table and Alexis beside our mock-up. We shaved inches here and there to improve it for her, and she was quick to point out how there may be no happy medium in design but at least a workable arrangement might be found for her.

(Reference Slide 63) The lower overall height in the end made this game very accessible to children. We worked with the game developer to keep the interaction zones right near the edge of the table where Alexis could reach, and with lots of seeable visuals in the other reach space in the center. We still knew the table would exclude certain wheelchair users, and had the game developer work on a version for smartphone and tablet and these are now demonstrated and played with in our ROM geology classroom and can also be used in one's own school. A player with a tablet on their lap can wirelessly connect to the main table in our actual gallery and so join their family or rest of their classmates in playing the game. So all of these spinoff benefits grew out of a dialogue with Alexis and our cardboard mock-ups.

(Reference Slide 64) This next theme is about carrying the big idea across alternative formats, and as you know, requesting alternative formats is actually something that's built into the legislation. Alternative formats are a way of generating many modes of engagement for different kinds of users. People learn differently. What works for one may not work for another. So we find for the main ideas in an exhibition, it's actually okay to repeat a message or experience in a variety of formats.

(Reference Slide 65) We can often deliver the main ideas in an exhibition with more accessible features that are useful for many types of visitors. Components like touchable teaching objects or models, touchable raised-line graphics, Braille, descriptive audio, text and infographics highlighting the important ideas and strategically used throughout. And, of course, not everything can or should be done this way in an exhibition, but it's important to carry the main themes this way.

This picture shows a large beautifully carved stone statute from our exhibition about the ancient Mayan civilization. It started with a large print introductory label at the base of the statute, and right off to the side, this half scale touchable label with raised lines so everybody could feel and appreciate the detail on the actual not touchable object. The text tells visitors to watch out for a number of these drawings throughout the exhibition, and English and French Braille is presented on the right-hand side of this label.

(Reference Slide 66) Moving to our blue whale exhibition, this example space is the very first room that introduces the blue whale story, "Out of the Depths", and visitors stood among three super-sized screens

for a short immersive video that introduced the story. It was an important

setup to seeing the awe inspiring whale skeleton that was right around the

corner in the next room, and we wanted everyone to share in the very

same story and emotional experience, so here's a small-scale look of the

opening sequence of the video shown using still pictures from it.

(Reference Slide 67) It opens with a very emotional music underlining

it, and the on-screen captions read, "2014 Newfoundland and Labrador".

(Reference Slide 68) The music continues. Caption reads, "A Tragic

Event".

(Reference Slide 69) And then the music builds to a very full emotional

sound, and the captions reads, "for one of the most endangered animals

on earth".

(Reference Slide 70) Then the music takes a turn and saddens, and the

captions read, "9 blue whales died".

(Reference Slide 71) As the sad music continues, the caption read,

"Two washed ashore". And it finishes in about another minute to tell the

entire story of bringing the whales into the museum and displaying them

there and what an educational opportunity that was.

(Reference Slide 72) Next you'll see the space was designed with lots

of room for crowds and visitors who attended with their wheelchair or

scooter. The messaging was carried on screen using what would otherwise

be just the normal way of carrying captions for voiceover, and there was a

little bit of voice where we needed to do that, but we used the captioning

idea as actually the main delivery vehicle for the messaging in the film so

that it was easily understood, and for those who couldn't see the

experience in this room and the story was described in the first stop, you can see there the transcript on the right-hand of the free downloadable audio tour, which we now do as a standard for our major exhibitions.

This tour could be listened to at home as well as an armchair experience, or it may actually stimulate a visit to the museum by starting with it at home or finishing with it afterward. Our audio stops are written in plain descriptive language that makes a picture for those who cannot look with their eyes, and draws attention to significant details for those who can. The entire experience was reinforced in detail filled in with a large infographic for that kind of learner which was placed behind a wall on video screens. It also included a "Try it if you Dare" with a display of what rotting whales smelled like, so a multisensory experience.

(Reference Slide 73) Our goal was to have everyone be in awe of this magnificent creature, be amazed, and feel empathy for it, and so be more prepared to learn about blue whales. We left the space uncluttered with lots of space around the actual skeleton, and then we added a life-sized high resolution video of a living whale played in behind it, and this is something that our advisors felt was essential to balance the tragedy with a celebration of living whales.

(Reference Slide 74) Next you see that displays around the edge of the room were designed to appeal to different styles of learning to give that message over and over again about how awesome they are. The big idea of how massive blue whales are was repeated. We wanted a fun, immediate, inclusive experience. So here you see the visitors could roll up onto with their wheelchair or walk up on to a weigh scale that would give a

readout of how many of you it would take to equal the weight of this blue whale when alive.

For other kinds of learners, an infographic showed how many of the largest dinosaur would equal the weight, as well as elephants and humans.

(Reference Slide 75) Durable, touchable models made out of bronze compared the blue whale on display when alive to the largest dinosaur and the longest animal ever, the boot lace worm, which reaches 30 meters long, and simple fun facts were given on labels that swing away to tell more.

(Reference Slide 76) The label for the whale itself is designed to make science easy. And now we set lower overall work counts in our exhibition texts. We move often the burden of communication away from text to other media. (Coughing). Excuse me. We show things more than say them. We try to write in plain language. Sometimes we make the content more approachable using humor, such as this one point I pulled out about whales and fish, and we care deeply about accuracy but also brevity, without leaving important things out, and we follow the CNIB Clear Print Guidelines for legible graphic design.

(Reference Slide 77) And I want to finish with this example of an exhibition component designed to communicate to diverse visitors. As an architect, it appeals to me, it appeals to the kid in me, as somebody who likes cool old museum stuff, I like it. I hope others enjoyed it as much as I did. When the team worked on it, we channelled many of our advisors and their personae. For our exhibition Pompeii in the shadow of a volcano, we wanted to tell the story of this fabulous luxury house found in ruins --

(Coughing) -- excuse me -- excavated from the ash of the volcano. The real house stays in Pompeo. We decided to show a model of it, and in the 1920s, the ROM artist, Sylvia Hahn, reconstructed the entire house in a little scale model where she hand painted all the congress coves and mosaics in miniature, and for years it was outside of reach inside of a showcase.

(Reference Slide 78) Our current artist, Georgia, carefully remade the whole thing using photos of Sylvia's walls and floors, and our carpenter, Jonathon, figured out how to make the inside slide in and out of the house exterior so all the beautiful interior was revealed. It was mounted at a height easily used by different sized visitors seated or standing.

(Reference Slide 79) The delicate interior was still protected under Plexiglas, but a raised touchable layer of the floor plan was added with key numbers and Braille in English and French labels off to one side and English and French Braille on the other. Sliding the drawer in and out revealed all the key features, ideas like a garden in the back opened to the sky. (Coughing). That there was actually a retail shop built into the street side and that there's a hole in the middle of the roof sloped to deliver rainwater to a pool in a central courtyard. Here you see that there was a stop on a free downloadable audio tour and a stop on our ASL YouTube ROM Pompeii podcast that fully described this clever layout and the beauty of the original house.

(Reference Slide 80) So where are we now? We still feel we have much to do. We want to document all of our experimentation in some kind of toolkit for staff and to share it with other museums. (Coughing).

We need to have more representations of persons with disabilities on our staff, and we're slowly getting there. And we anticipate that portable technology that we all carry with us will become more adaptive to individual needs and preferences, and we're trying to stay on top of how to make our content available for that.

And last but not least, we want to make the museum even more appealing and useful as a civic hub for everyone.

(Reference Slide 81) Thank you.

>> THEA KURDI: Thank you very much, David. That's great to hear how much consultation the ROM has been using with people with disabilities, to hear a diverse range of abilities. I especially liked the idea of designing for the edge, the use of mock-ups, and alternative formats with English and French Braille, and the use of visual descriptions where you are using videos.

The sensitivity you and your team have shown is fantastic and the kind of leadership we're going to need to get to the AODA's vision for a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. Thank you.

(Reference Slide 82) So we have -- we're about a minute before 1:00. We've run a little bit long this time, so for those who need to leave, thank you for participating. We will be sending the questionnaire for you. For those of you who can hang around, we will continue for another few minutes to answer some questions, so if you want to go ahead and start typing your questions into the chat window or sending the email to erin@artsbuildontario.ca, we'll try to get to as many of them as we can. So I'll just give people a minute here to try to write some questions. And we

have Michelle Alderson writing. It looks like a couple of people are starting to write. We have a question for David here. How did you go about creating an accessibility advisory committee? David, would you be able to answer that?

>> DAVE HOLLANDS: I just had to figure out how to unmute my microphone. Sorry. So that work actually did begin by taking a number of people who had complained to the museum about barriers to their visit and inviting them to be people to actually meet with us and tell us about -- give us some -- fill in some detail on that, and so our very first invitees were from that core group, but now we have a more formal process where there's actually -- when somebody's spot becomes available on the committee, it's promoted or advertised and then there's actually an adjudication process because there are a lot of people that are really keen on participating with us, which is really great at this stage.

The team is actually currently on hiatus because the museum's going through a visioning process for its next move into -- moving forward for visitor experience, so we want that vision to be crystal clear at the executive level, and then we're going to reform the committee and invite new participants. Does that help?

>> THEA KURDI: Yeah, that's perfect. Thanks very much, Dave. Lorene, we have a quick question. So sorry to be short here, but there's a question here about mental health and design spaces for individuals living with depression or anxiety. Has there been any consideration about mental health and design spaces that you're aware of?

>> LORENE CASIEZ: I would say it's only for, you know -- honestly speaking, it's for specific facilities, so any project work that we've done around -- for -- even then, it's not nearly discussed or fully explored to the extent that it should.

>> THEA KURDI: I would agree with that. I would say that we're starting to see things on the horizon about mental health, but mostly it's been around health care. We have seen some things starting to happen and surface around autism and designing for the needs of people with autism, and some of that's service related and some of it's space related.

So we have another question here from Peter@communityinnovationhub.org, and his comment here is we're encouraging spiritual institutions to use their unused space, which is open for 60% to 80% of the time. Would it help to design some design examples or templates to show spiritual institutions what could be done with a reasonable investment? So I guess Lorene or Dave -- maybe Dave, could you talk -- have you found any inexpensive solutions for creating maybe open-use spaces that makes them more accessible?

>> DAVE HOLLANDS: I do know that we often start with -- we try to find the path of least resistance in terms of expense. There's no simple answer to this question because we really do need money in order to make accessible design work, and so we took -- in our case, we took that on as a really serious part of the challenge, and that's why working from it the top down was important because making the case for financial support was a very necessary part of it. So even running a meeting and bringing in ASL interpreters is something that has a financial component to it, so I know

this may not be helping, but I would say that it's not -- it's not an easy or cheap fix.

>> THEA KURDI: Okay. Thanks. Lorene, I know when I'm talking to clients, I often emphasize in the built environment about 20% of what we have to do has space impact and has cost impact, but about 80% of what we have to do is about deciding simple things and low-cost things. Has that been your experience, and could you list some of the things that you think really help perhaps accessibility in ways people don't think of that are low-cost options?

>> LORENE CASIEZ: Sure. I think when we talk about low-cost, we're -- I mean, maybe it's changing now with the advent of new technologies, but some low-hanging fruit is -- are things around -- that move beyond space, so ideas around vision and sound are some things that, you know, like if your footprint is established, how do we deal with some of the other things that can be managed, such as surfaces in terms of lighting, glare, color contrast, and -- interior design strategies around color. Those are, you know, still a cost but easier than breaking down -- you know, making wider door -- open -- sorry, excuse me, wider doorways or wider corridors.

>> THEA KURDI: You hit on many of my favourites there. Some of the things we look at are swing-free hinges in that situation. That could be quite useful as well. I think if we don't have any more questions, we'll have to leave it there for today, but I know that that was a fantastic conversation with lots of really good ideas, very rich experience. Thank you very much.

(Reference Slide 83) We'll just conclude here with a quick reminder of the upcoming accessibility webinars we have. The fourth of our series is entitled the Best Practices for Architects, Designers and Creative Spaces on Accessibility, which will be happening on Tuesday, March 26th, so if you know anybody who's involved with that, please let them know that this is happening. We're going to have the amazing Amy Potier and Corey Timpson, who are going to be involved with more great examples. The fifth in our series is on Safety, Fire Codes and Accessibility for Creative Spaces, which will happen on Tuesday, April the 23rd, with presenters Martin Day and Marnie Peters. These two know accessibility and they know signage, so a great opportunity to do some really valuable learning there. And our sixth and last of the webinar series will be Invisible disabilities and Creative Spaces, which will be happening on Tuesday, May the 14th, which presenters Alex Bulmer and Andrew Gurza, so hopefully you'll get a chance to participate in all of the remaining three, but if not, please make sure to book up the days that you're going to be attending and let other people know.

(Reference Slide 84) So you can find out more and register for it on the [Learning Series page](), and perhaps we can paste that link into the chat window for you, and, of course, if you can't see that and need that information, please email us, and we'd be happy to provide that for you.

(Reference Slide 85) Special thank you to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for ArtsBuild Ontario.

(Reference Slide 86) We couldn't have created this series without their valuable input, and please don't forget when this is over, we're going

to be sending you a survey. We would like to thank the Government of

Ontario for their support of this project, and when we send you the survey,

please let us know what we did well that we should continue to do, and if

there's anything that we did that could use some improvement, we'd love

to hear that too.

Thank you so much for attending today. We wish you the best

accessible day possible, and we look forward to seeing you again next time.

Thank you.

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