TATE MODERN – MULTIMEDIA TOUR

The Multimedia Guide is available in the gallery from the desks on Level 1 and Level 2. You will be asked to leave a piece of identification, then can hire a Guide for the duration of your visit. There is a tour that is specially designed for children, and a highlights tour in four foreign languages will be launching soon.

Price: £2 (£1 concessions)

The development of content for the Multimedia Tour was influenced by members of the Raw Canvas young people's group who advised on topics of interest and game ideas, as well as testing out the content and interface designs at various stages.

Raw Canvas is a peer-led programme at Tate Modern where young people get the opportunity to take part in a range of different projects.

Find out more in the Raw Canvas section.

BSL Tour

Alongside the Multimedia Tour we will be offering a tour for deaf visitors in British Sign Language. First piloted in November 2003, Tate Modern's BSL Tour was the first sign language guide of a museum collection, and reflects Tate's commitment to increasing visitors' access to our displays. The handheld computer plays video clips of interpreters signing a tour of highlights of the displays, as well as presenting visual interactive content such as games and opinion polls. The tour provides on-demand interpretation for deaf visitors in their preferred language, as an alternative to having to wait for a BSL-interpreted gallery talk.

The BSL Tour will be available from 4 April 2005.

The Multimedia Tour is aimed at visitors who are looking for an accessible introduction to modern and contemporary art, and presumes no prior knowledge of art history. When the concept was first developed, we had visitors between the ages of 16 and 25 in mind, as confident users of new technology. However, since then, all kinds of people have tried out the tour, from families with younger children, to school groups, and individual adult visitors of all ages, and they have rated the content highly.

BSL tour

Alongside the Multimedia Tour we are offering a tour in British Sign Language for deaf people, using the same hand-held computers. It has never been done before, and means that for the first time deaf visitors can access on-demand information in their own language when they visit Tate Modern.

'I have learnt more today than I have done in years of visiting galleries.'

'A fantastic addition to the Tate Modern experience. I really liked the extra information, history and music.'

'The best part was the audio-visual which involved you with certain pieces so at times you felt like dancing or laughing - it evoked more emotion.'

Visitor comments

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation shows that people taking the tour spend longer in the galleries, and 87 percent say that the tour improved their visit. The most popular types of content are interviews with artists and videos of artist at work, and audio commentaries accompanied by images.

The tour experience is carefully constructed, with information provided in short segments, so that the viewer's attention is consistently drawn back to the artwork on display. By incorporating a wide spectrum of voices and opinions, from inside

and outside the museum, we hope to promote a sense of genuine debate about ideas in modern and contemporary art. The interactive elements of the tour give visitors a chance to offer their own opinions, and encourage a proactive approach to learning.

Using hand-held computers to deliver a range of multimedia content is particularly attractive to an art gallery like Tate Modern that is concerned to preserve the visual integrity of its displays. The devices are discreet and allow each visitor to access information in the order they choose and at their own pace, avoiding the problems of crowding associated with more conventional static computer terminals. This new tour takes its place alongside Tate's award-winning Audio Tours, and reflects the gallery's commitment to developing the next generation of learning tools.

Follow the links below to find out more:

- [Multimedia Tour Phase 1: Key Findings](#)
- [Multimedia Tour Phase 2: Technical Details](#)
- [Multimedia Tour Phase 2: Some Visitor Responses](#)
- [Links to more information on mobile digital tours](#)

Phase 1: Key Findings

The first phase of the tour won a Bafta award for technical innovation. The judges said:

'Genuinely groundbreaking, this was an exciting demonstration of how new technology can be used to enhance museum and gallery visits. Commendably, Tate Modern is working with day-to-day feedback from visitors to develop a system that complements an already stunning physical learning space.'

Key Findings PDF document (200 KB)

Phase 2: Technical details

The handheld computers are Toshiba's model e800 which include integrated wireless cards. Content is stored on a central server and is delivered to the PDAs through a standard 802.11b wireless network, running on a virtual LAN. This use of a wireless network means that practically limitless information can be provided and visitors can also request the central server to send further information to their home email address. Content is programmed in Macromedia Flash, version 6. The operating system used is PocketPC 2003.
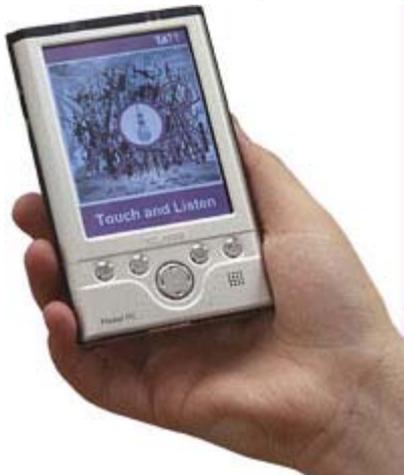
Phase 2: Some Visitor Responses

This year is Phase 2 of the Tate Modern
Multimedia Tour.

Over the next few months you will be able to see a
changing selection of visitor responses to the

current Multimedia Tour. A full evaluation will be taking place, the results of which will be written up at the end of the year.

General

"This is amazing. Much more fun than the audio guide. It makes Tate Modern the most fascinating museum in the world."

"Greatly enjoyed the multimedia tour. A very clever use of new technology."

"Great Concept!"

"I am not usually a fan of audio guides but I found using the pda very, very informative."

"Very enjoyable but almost too much information."

"Loved it!"

"Most enjoyable - wish I had more time"

"Very good!"

"I'm not a big fan of audio guides, especially with art which requires personal interpretation (what doesn't?) However I found the experience of using the PDA very informative.. I particularly liked hearing the artists' views, and their tastes in music. I think as a result I probably spent 3 or 4 times as long in gallery rooms... As an artist, it made me look more as an art historian would. Reading a catalogue is not the same."

"Ideally it should feature all works, with tours aimed at different age groups and skill levels, different languages, sign language etc."

"Could the software be sold in the shop for other PDA users to use in the gallery, and also virtually elsewhere? That way it reaches a wider audience and reduces costs of technology, theft etc."

"I'm afraid it was too slow to keep up with the pace and wanted to move - loading took too long when navigating back and forth between pages. The bunny rabbits were not appropriate in an adult programme though the question of what is art is a great one to tackle. It would be helpful to show where the wcs are since that is a common question. Some of the entries are far too long - perhaps a choice of depth would be

good so that multiple visitor types would be served. Very cool though! Keep up the good work!"

"I'm not sure I'm comfortable with the thought of hundreds of visitors tapping their PDA..lights blinking on / off, sound leaking through the speakers. However, the PDA system prototype works better, I think than traditional phone systems."

"Absolutely excellent in all aspects. I found the commentary enlightening and challenging. I couldn't have taken in any more on one visit."

"Cool and different."

"I hope that more works of art are included soon!"

"Informative, entertaining and fascinating and gives out more intensity (given that I am not a professional and tend to get distracted when I wander without a guide). Good idea!"

"A fantastic addition to the Tate Modern Experience. I really liked the extra information, history and music."

"Generally really exciting. You feel a bit self- conscious at first, but soon it's like you're being let in on secrets no-one else knows! It would be great to extend it more and publicise it more clearly in the galleries. Utterly fantastic!"

Content

"This has provided a substantial contribution to understanding the works on display, their contexts and intended meaning. Brilliant!"

"I clearly enjoyed the tour, considering before I did not really enjoy modern art. But the tour helped me see more clearly into the meaning of it all and helped me enjoy it more"

"The PDA did freeze a couple of times when it began to load a selection on a picture. The information was very good and gave me much more insight into the artist's perspective."

"The best part was the audio visual which involved you with certain pieces so at times you felt like dancing, or laughing - it evoked more emotion."

"I like very much the way it draws your attention to and from the screen and artwork."

"I particularly liked the narrator's explanation of 'cubism'. I would like to see more of this."

"I really liked the linking of different media eg. Music dancers Pollock image of boat in Twombly."

"Want to have more exhibits on machine, particularly those works which are well known or definitely need explanation to add to enjoyment. Would also like more voiceovers from artists."

"I particularly liked the wide variety of works chosen to draw our attention to. You could have several different tours on different floors."

"Good move forward... helped me appreciate the least appealing artworks. Gives me a broader perspective and view and good voice on PDA!"

"I'm just a beginner for modern art, but I learnt from the multimedia tour and had much more enjoyment than I expected."

"More historical / factual information needed."

"An hour wasn't enough to fully explore all the works."

"The pictures or video of the background of each paintings helped me to understand more!"

"Excellent content which expanded my mind re: modern techniques."

System

"I don't know if it already has a 'sleep time' or some sort of mechanism that shuts it off while you're walking so that your buttons or anything don't turn it on unintentionally, but the only problem I had is that I would switch on sometimes. Otherwise, it was extremely helpful. I look forward to seeing them soon and using one again."

"I would prefer to use my own PDA and be able to download the tour for a fee. The tour did make me think much more about works that I'd normally walk past, but it also stopped me from being diverted to look at some things as I was too busy looking at the screen. It felt rather isolating, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. It did help me to concentrate on the works I was targeted to."

"I found the navigation on the map a little difficult as the flash buttons were too small, so became fiddly. I think there should be a more direct link between the art work and the individual questions, again the button is too small and too sensitive - end up back at home page. Otherwise, brilliant, wish I had been on the team designing it!!"

BSL Tour

"It's great to have a BSL Tour Model. I would come here in my own time and study all around the gallery. Thank you."

"I wanted to say a big congratulations for the new project. This is really excellent. I look forward to an improved technical part and more deaf interpreters. Well done!"

"Generally I thought it is a wonderful device despite some teething problems. Keep on the good work!"

Links
More information on mobile digital tours

www.mobilearn.org

MOBIlearn is a European-led research and development project which explores how mobile technologies can be utilised to enhance learning in various contexts. This website gives lots of information about the project as well as containing many other useful links in this area of research.

www.exploratorium.org/guidebook

The Electronic Guidebook is an Exploratorium research project investigating the use of handheld computing devices and wireless networks to support a richer learning experience for science museum visitors.

www.cimi.org/whitesite

Background and current research information for the Handscape project - a continually evolving technical "white paper".

www.cordis.lu/esprit/src/25574.htm

European project to produce digital city and museum guides, funded by the EC's IST

4th Framework Programme.

www.parc.xerox.com/csl/projects/guidebooks/project.html

Electronic guidebook project at Filoli, a historic house in Woodside, California, by the Palo Alto Research Center.

dsonline.computer.org/archives/ds300/ds3newprint.htm

The Experience Music Project's digital guide to their music collection.

www.sfmoma.org/press/pressroom.asp?id=117

The *Points of Departure* exhibition at SFMOMA included both PDA guides and fixed screen-tables in the galleries