

## **(Name): Disability Access Document**

**\*Please check with me before sharing this document\***

### **What is an access document?**

Access documents are used by disabled artists to ensure that our needs are met when working with others. They help to cover important issues prior to beginning a working relationship, allowing both institution/gallery/organisation and artist to feel confident and comfortable in their interactions with each other.

### **Introduction:**

I have a disability that effects my energy levels, physical ability, cognition and memory. My condition fluctuates and is made worse by overexertion, therefore I have to be extremely careful and conscious with how I expend my energy and plan my time. This limits me from doing things spontaneously, being able to stay late/long to meetings, being able to attend many social events and being able to adhere to many of the expectations placed upon artists and their labour. Often, I want to do many things that my body is unable to do; please don't be disheartened or offended if I can't spend as much time with you as I'd like, or if I can't attend your events as often as I'd like to. If I am going through a 'crash' or 'flare' I am usually unable to leave the house until it passes., please bear with me during these times. I am happy to discuss my condition and my access needs so please let me know if you'd like to talk about any of the points in this document further.

### **General:**

I am an ambulatory wheelchair user, on a good day I can manage to walk a little. I can also sometimes manage some stairs with assistance if I am forewarned. Please do discuss access info with me, I'm very open to talking about whether I'll be able to navigate a venue. Please don't assume that somewhere is accessible or not accessible to me, let's discuss.

I work with a care assistant much of the time. Please address me (and not my care assistant) when you are talking to me or about me. Of course, feel free to talk to my assistant if you want to talk to them about themselves.

Please never move my wheelchair without asking me first.

If we go somewhere where I can't/don't bring my wheelchair, I need access to a chair with a backrest at all times.

I always appreciate having access to comfortable seating (sofas or places to lie down) whenever possible.

Because of my condition I need to plan and schedule things very carefully, please be as punctual as you're able to if we have a meeting planned.

At times, if I've overextended myself I may need to go and rest abruptly. If this happens and my care assistant isn't around, please help me to find a quiet place where I can be in my own and rest for a while.

**Communication:**

I do my best to respond to emails / calls within a one-week timeframe, but during a crash period I may not be able to keep to this. Please feel free to head emails "URGENT" or send me a text message saying that the situation is urgent if you need my attention more quickly. Prior to busy times or project deadlines I'm very happy to sit down and make a plan together for how to deal with an increased workload / urgency.

**Meetings/events:**

I need to rest frequently. I appreciate if we can schedule no longer than 60 minutes in a meeting before a 15-minute break.

I am always extremely grateful if there is a quiet room with comfortable seating or a place to lie down that I can use during breaks.

The maximum contact time I can manage in a day is 4-5 hours. I will need to be alone, resting either side of this period.

It is often impossible for me to participate in activities on consecutive days. If an event is programmed over a few days, I'm usually happy to come along and see how much I'm able to participate, but I can't guarantee being able to participate over multiple consecutive days.

I do my best to plan my time in order to be present at events and meetings, but sometimes this is impossible, and I will ask to participate via skype or through my assistant. Please be open to facilitating this where possible. Let's not prioritise face-to-face contact as the only meaningful mode of communication... this can be very isolating for me (and many disabled people).

If I'm unable to attend a meeting or event, I'm always very grateful for an update via email or voicemail to let me know what happened and how everything went. I hate to miss out and I am always working as much as I'm able to, so I appreciate being kept in the loop.

**Travel:**

I need to travel with a designated care assistant.

If I am travelling for over 3 hours, I will need at least one day's rest before starting work. If I am travelling internationally, I need at least 3 days to adjust to time differences before starting work.

**Costs:**

If you, I, or we are applying for funding for a project or budgeting a project, this needs to include access costs such as a personal assistant and accessible transport, as well as costs for making the project itself accessible for an audience.

**Installs:**

Please factor a longer install time into our schedule than you do when working with abled people. I prefer at least 4 days. I can be present for short periods at installs, but I can't guarantee being physically present on consecutive days.

I will need help from a technician to present my work as I can do very little physical labour. Please let me know as soon as we begin our discussions if a tech can't be provided. I am happy to liaise with techs over the phone and email; I have done many successful installs remotely. I'm very happy to discuss with you how an install may work best for both of us.

**Marketing:**

Wherever my name is listed on your website or any marketing material (including on social media), the access information for the event/building should be listed. This should include: details on any stairs, toilets, the nearest accessible public transport and route from that transport to the venue, and what kind of seating / access provisions are available at the event. I am happy to help to compile this information; if you need pointers or would like to me to look over what you've written, please ask me.

You can see an example of the information that A.I.R Gallery New York has put on their website: <https://www.airgallery.org/visit>

Thank you for taking the time to read this, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

(name)