

Access Commitment

Ratified October 8th, 2024

Eyelevel strives to accommodate the needs of our visitors, artists, volunteers and the people we work with as best as possible, mitigating the barriers to access. This Access Commitment describes our orientation to and investment in accessibility, and how this plan will continue to be developed, implemented and evaluated as a living document. This document aims to guide our access practices and philosophy and make a public commitment to access that we, as an organization, can be held to. The appendix outlines the accessibility practices we currently have in place and the practices we are working towards.

Orienting to and Investing in Access

Eyelevel understands accessibility as an evolving, iterative practice best informed by Deaf, hard of hearing, disabled, Mad, chronically ill, immunocompromised, blind/partially-sighted, neurodivergent and any other identities that fall within the larger “disability” framework and their lived experiences. Referencing Mia Mingus, we understand that for accessibility to lead to intersectional justice, we need to move beyond logistics and inclusion and instead invest in access as a vehicle for cultural transformation. We are excited to continue to grow our networks within the disability community and access providers, develop our access knowledge, and build resources to support an expanse of access practices and programming through which diverse communities feel welcome and represented at Eyelevel. It is our belief at Eyelevel that everyone has access needs, and “able-bodiedness” is a temporary condition. *“The only thing separating disabled and able-bodied people is luck and time.”* (Imani Barbarin)

Moving Beyond The “Access Checklist”

While access practices are important, access is not one-size-fits-all, nor is it a “solution” to a “problem.” We outline best practices for our organization as starting points for conversation, methods of gathering and supporting access needs, and shaping flexible and collaborative practices that are driven by a strive for justice, relationship building and community mindfulness.

Eyelevel looks at access beyond audience engagement and considers the access needs of our staff, artists, collaborators, volunteers and community as a whole. This situates access not as a

small portion of our programming logistics, but as a fundamental approach to all of our operations, relationships, and programming.

“A truly radical approach to accessibility requires considering the tensions between ‘accessibility as a solution or checklist’ versus ‘accessibility’ as an ongoing negotiation. For radical disability activists, the potential of ‘accessibility’ is precisely to mark ‘access’ as an ongoing and shifting process rather than as a mode of solving individualized problems” (Kelly Fritsch, 2016, p.3).

“When access is thought to be an issue for abnormal people, disability becomes an individual problem. As a result, we tend to ignore the ways in which disability involves broader social relations...” (Fritsch, 2016, p.3).

Disability Justice

Disability justice is central to Eyelevel’s way of thinking as an organization. We are an arts organization that is mandated to support the development and dissemination of socially motivated contemporary visual art, prioritizing artists who are underrepresented and misrepresented. We recognize that the oppressive systems we operate under are disabling and isolating to intersectionality oppressed people the most. As a small organization, we can be nimble, respond quickly and make changes based on the needs and input of our community. Eyelevel’s programming centres community connection and relationship building as a way to move closer toward justice.

“Our communities and movements must address the issue of access. There is no way around it. Accessibility is concrete resistance to the isolation of disabled people. Accessibility is nothing new, and we can work to understand access in a broad way, encompassing class, language, childcare, gender-neutral bathrooms as a start.

We must, however, move beyond access by itself. We cannot allow the liberation of disabled people to be boiled down to logistics. We must understand and practice an accessibility that moves us closer to justice, not just inclusion or diversity.

As organizers, we need to think of access with an understanding of disability justice, moving away from an equality-based model of sameness and “we are just like you” to a model of disability that embraces difference, confronts privilege and challenges what is considered “normal” on every front. We don’t want to simply join the ranks of the privileged; we want to dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them” (Mingus, 2011, para. 2-4)

Access As Intersectional

This access commitment, as well as Eyelevel's ongoing and evolving access practices, live in the context of the other guiding documents of our organization. It exists in collaboration with our mandate, mission and value statements, our Code of Conduct and the practices we put in place toward harm reduction, community care, anti-racism and anti-oppression. We recognize that access removes systemic barriers beyond and intertwined with disability.

"We are pushing for an understanding of how ableism affects all of our justice movements. We are drawing connections between ableism and other systems of oppression and violent institutions" (Mingus, 2011, para.12).

"Access should encompass broader social, economic, and political dimensions, addressing systemic barriers and power imbalances that exclude disabled individuals from full participation in society" (Smilges, 2023, p 23).

Open Access

Eyelevel approaches access as collaborative and ever-shifting. This commitment outlines goals of seeking expert input from disability justice experts on an ongoing basis, but we also recognize the *crip wisdom*¹ of our artists, staff, volunteers, audience and collaborators to know their own bodies, their own communities and their own needs. We respect and respond to feedback, take requests seriously and strive to work collaboratively when navigating access friction and meeting access needs.

Carmen Papalia is a disability-identified artist and curator, who self-identifies as a non-visual learner, working out of Vancouver. In a 2018 issue of *Canadian Art*, Papalia put forth his framework of Open Access. Open Access resists the "checklist" approach to access that more traditional approaches to access tend to take up. Instead, it argues that access is a process of mutual exchange that is co-created by those present, each of whom bring their own body of knowledge and are 'experts' in their own right. Rather than aligning access with policies and enforcement, Open Access seeks to garner trust and intimacy between people by positioning access as " a responsive support network that adapts as needs and available resources change" (Papalia, 2018, para. 7).

"Without crip wisdoms and perspectives . . . the efficacy of access practices can be compromised, particularly when the focus and investment in access is on making things "better

¹ *"But my whole life is based around the idea that crip wisdom is both the ultimate reality and wisdom that everyone needs to learn from. I see crip wisdom in all the life-giving ways disabled, Deaf, sick and neurodivergent folks mentor each other, giving each other lifesaving wisdom that no doctor's office will."*
Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

for all” over disrupting normative culture in order to make it more hospitable to disabled people, or create new cultural enclaves altogether” (Eliza Chandler, 2022).

Developing Our Access Commitments and Practices

As stated, Eyelevel understands accessibility as an evolving process that must be led by Deaf, hard of hearing, disabled, Mad, chronically ill, immunocompromised, blind/partially-sighted, and neurodivergent people and their lived experiences. Therefore, we will create ample opportunities to provide us with feedback, including:

- An accessibility suggestion box in the form of a Google form on our website. Suggestions can be made anonymously or with identification.
- A physical accessibility suggestion box is available at Eyelevel’s bookstore. Suggestions can be made anonymously or with identification.
- Eyelevel’s Artistic Co-Directors are available to visitors every Friday from 12 PM to 5 PM to drop into our bookstore and chat about Eyelevel’s access practices. Meetings can also be booked with Eyelevel’s Co-Directors [[Sally](#) / [Cinthia](#)]
- We commit to a minimum of one program a year that foregrounds accessibility and dialogues of crip culture and disability arts.
- We commit to applying for funding to expand our access practices with strategic funds and applying for funding to cover access costs in all project grants.
- We will seek funds to establish an “access advisory board” of Deaf, hard of hearing, disabled, Mad, chronically ill, immunocompromised, blind/partially-sighted, neurodivergent artists, arts-workers and access providers who will work with Eyelevel to continue developing our access plan, build up our connections with their communities, and host biannual feedback sessions with the public.
 - Once launched, our access advisory board will hold biannual access feedback sessions.

Staff and Volunteer Training

Using strategic funds and professional development grants, Eyelevel’s permanent staff and Board of Directors will undertake yearly training on a combination of practical skills and “theory” to ensure that a breadth of knowledge and experience is held at the organization with complementary and overlapping skills. This can and should include anti-oppression training, de-escalation training, trauma first-response training, sighted guide training, first aid and CPR

training, nonviolent crisis intervention training, peer support training, plain language training, etc. Eyelevel's staff and board will stay up to date on training programs offered locally and online, and build an expanding repertoire of training resources for contract staff and volunteers.

How We Will Respond To Community Feedback

All access feedback will be brought to our staff and Board of Directors and, once formed, our access advisory board for consideration. When determining whether and how to incorporate the suggested practices into our venue or our programming, we will consider the following:

- Does the proposed access practice prioritize members of Deaf, hard of hearing, disabled, Mad, chronically ill, immunocompromised, blind/partially-sighted, and neurodivergent communities, or other marginalized communities?
- Could the proposed access practice create a barrier for other artists, participants, or audience members? If so, how can Eyelevel work through any access friction?
- Can we incorporate the suggested practice with our current financial and human resources and within our physical and virtual spaces? Do we have connections with the access providers to take on this access practice? Do we have the technology to take on this access practice? If the answer to any of these questions is no, how can we build this capacity?

When adopting a new access practice, we will share it with our community through the communication plan outlined in the appendix.

Evolving Our Access Commitments And Practices

Eyelevel recognizes that strengthening our access knowledge and building our access commitments and practices requires ongoing activity. We will engage in this by:

- Responding to community feedback following the practices outlined above.
- Immersing ourselves within broader disability culture by attending conferences and artist/curatorial talks, reading work in the field, etc. and including disability justice writing with our board, staff and committee orientation documents.
- Partnering with disability artists, curators, and organizations on programming.

- Incorporating access practices we learn from artists through their access riders.
- We commit to applying for funding to support these access practices as they emerge.
- We commit to reviewing this document every two years at a minimum.

Current access practices

Communication

Public Communications

- **Access Notes:** (a piece of writing detailing the access measures and infrastructure of a given space) will be included in all public communications for all spaces that Eyelevel utilizes.
- **Access Riders:** (an optional fillable form to be attached to contracts and countersigned by Eyelevel staff and requests detailed access needs) will be used to gather specific access needs for all artists, staff and volunteers working with Eyelevel. Access riders can be amended and revisited at any time.
- **Access Videos:** (short videos to support wayfinding) will be posted publicly on Vimeo, social media, our website and linked in access guides for Eyelevel's permanent spaces and programs.
- **Access Guides:** (comprehensive written documents detailing access protocols for spaces and programs) will be created for Eyelevel spaces and adapted/adjusted to specific programs as-needed. These documents will include expanded access notes, event descriptions, transportation info, participation expectations, content warnings, links to access videos, resources, contact info, FAQs etc. Eyelevel will expand the "accessibility" page on our website into a detailed access guide for the organization in general.
- **Plain Language:** Eyelevel commits to using plain language as per the Government of Canada's plain language guide for all calls for submissions and application forms. We will also create abridged plain-language versions of all policies, including this access commitment. While working with artists, curators and writers we will support creating plain versions of the written components of their work.
- **Graphic Design:** High-contrast design and accessible fonts, such as sans serif with a minimum font size of 12pt, will be used for all digital and print promotions and publications.

- **Image Descriptions:** will be included in all digital communications including social media, website, newsletters and access guides. Eyelevel will also refrain from publishing digital documents that are not screen-reader friendly.
- **Video Captioning:** When presenting video artwork, and posting videos to social media, Eyelevel will include closed captions, video transcript and video descriptions. We will provide a combination of automated captioning and, on occasion, human captioning depending on the length of the video.
- We will continue to outline Eyelevel's accessibility practices on our website and we will provide printed copies of these practices in the bookstore. We will supply plain language versions of this document on both venues.
- We will promote our events through **Creative Connector**, an online connections hub and national listserv that aims to connect disability communities with accessible arts and cultural events.
- **Land Acknowledgements** will accompany all access notes and be given at public events. Eyelevel has a standard land acknowledgement drafted in consultation with Carrie Allison in 2020 that can be used as a basis, but should be viewed as a working, living template to be adapted and built off of, correlating to recent events, the program it foregrounds, etc. Land Acknowledgements are gestures towards sovereignty and making treaty, but only mean something when accompanied by real actions.

Day-to-day communication strategies

- Eyelevel staff will clearly communicate their availability to one another, artists and volunteers through multiple channels including viewable calendars, bookable calendars, vacation responders and office chats. Strategies such as designating no-meeting or focus times, rest times, and slow-response times are encouraged.
- Eyelevel staff will be mindful of the response time of others, especially when making requests and setting deadlines (i.e. deadlines to submit promotional materials). A general guideline we follow is two business days to see an email, five to respond before a nudge is needed, one week to review something and 2+ weeks to prepare something. While staff may not always be able to give each other these timelines, they should be considered minimum guidelines for artists and volunteers.
- Multiple streams of information holding (drive, calendars, meeting notes, recordings, etc.) will be used to make institutional knowledge widely available and communicated in

various formats (written guides, video guides, visual guides, etc.)

- Reminders for meetings, events, deadlines, etc. will be sent out to volunteers and collaborators a week ahead of time
- Multiple avenues of communication (meeting people where they are at email, text, phone calls, zoom, in-person) will be available and staff will strive to adapt their communication methods to the people we are working with as much as possible.

Physical accessibility

Eyelevel is located in Kijipuktuk (*Jeh-Book-Dook*), Mi'kma'ki (*Meeg-Mah-Gee*), the ancestral unceded and unsurrendered land of the Mi'kmaq (*Meeg-Mah*) and Wolastoqiyik (*Wool-Us-Too-We-Ig*).

2482 Maynard Street

This is a wheelchair-accessible building. The building has wide hallways and all doorways are a minimum of 36" wide. There are push-button door openers at the main entrances, and a button-operated lift to the second floor. The second floor is not open to the public except for special events and is normally locked with a keypad entry. 2482 Maynard Street is a low-scent, all-ages, low-stimuli building.

2482 Maynard Street has four (two per floor) large, private, large non-gendered bathrooms with grab bars and room to turn and for a support person. First-floor bathrooms have free tampons and pads. Washrooms on the first floor also have changing tables. All washrooms have sharps containers and room for a wheelchair to turn.

Eyelevel Bookstore & Office

There are two entrances to the building. The door on the left leads up to the second floor and is generally reserved for office use. Eyelevel's office is on the second floor which is closed to the public. Visitors can access our office for meetings and events by contacting Eyelevel's staff when they arrive at the building.

The second floor can be accessed via a full flight of stairs with a railing, or the accessible lift located at the far end of the Wonder'neath Project Space. The office has room for a wheelchair to make a 360° turn and a 36" wide unobstructed path to and from each workstation. The office has fluorescent overhead lighting, a window and desk lamps with warm LED lights at each workstation.

The door on the right is propped open for public access during Eyelevel's bookstore hours (Wednesdays to Fridays 12 PM-5 PM) and leads to a foyer with a second door that generally remains closed. This second door is a pull door but can also be opened with a push-button door opener. The bookstore is located on the first floor through Wonder'neath's Project Space. The Project Space can sometimes be loud due to programming in the space.

The bookstore is wheelchair friendly with display tables at 36" and room to pull a chair underneath. The till is mobile and there is room to turn a wheelchair 360° in the bookstore.

Books are a tactile experience, blind and partially-sighted folks are invited to explore our bookstore with touch and ask staff for any assistance they require. At present, Eyelevel's co-directors are trained as sighted guides. Eyelevel's bookstore and the project space are lit with adjustable overhead fluorescent lighting and natural light.

Transportation to 2482 Maynard Street and the Eyelevel bookstore

- Bus routes #2 and #3 stop on North Street, 3 blocks from 2482 Maynard.
- The building has visitor parking with reserved accessible parking spots.
- Both sides of the street at 2482 Maynard are *intended* to be paved and pedestrian-friendly. Presently, there is a lot of construction resulting in road and sidewalk closures often limiting access and forcing street crossing. Construction noise may also be a concern for some folks.

Eyelevel's Gottingen Studios

Eyelevel operates 6 private artist studios at 2177 Gottingen Street in a former character apartment. This space is closed to the public except for special events. Please note that this once was a residential space that has undergone limited, temporary renovations to become a shared and open (no individual locking studios) studio space.

Physical space: Eyelevel's space at 2177 Gottingen Street is distributed over two floors. The downstairs houses our 2 large studios, one non-gendered washroom, and a small kitchenette. The upper floor is broken up into 4 small studio spaces via temporary plywood walls. The upper floor has a peaked ceiling.

Stairs: Visitors to Eyelevel's studios must follow the hallway up a full flight of straight stairs, with a railing on the right-hand side, and a wall on the left. Four of our studios are located on the top floor, which is up a spiral staircase with a railing and wedge-shaped stairs of standard height and is a free-standing structure. The staircase is built from reinforced steel and aluminum. The railing will shift while visitors climb or descend stairs, creating the illusion that the stairs themselves are moving (they aren't!)

Doors: Eyelevel's studios are located through a non-automatic door that pushes in (opened with a handle) and requires a step up to enter the hallway.

Washrooms: Eyelevel's studios have a single non-gendered bathroom on site. The bathroom is located down a hallway adjacent to the stairs on the second floor. The bathroom has a sharps container but is not equipped with grab bars or changing facilities.

Lighting and environment: Eyelevel's studio has warm, ambient light and natural lighting. There is a balcony opened to the residents for use with a picnic table. The top floor has minimal natural light, and there are clamp lights available for each studio.

Noise: Studios are located directly above Radstorm, which hosts all-ages music events on Friday and Saturday nights. The studios are generally quiet during the day.

Resources: Radstorm's programs such as Inkstorm, the People's Photocopier, the People's Fridge, the People's Kiln and Sadrad are available to studio residents, subject to Radstorm's respective rules and criteria to access these resources.

Transportation: Gottingen Street is a main thoroughfare for bus routes. The #1, #7, #10, #41, #53, #61, #68 heading north-bound (leaving the Bridge Terminal) all stop less than 80 meters from our bookstore on the same side of the street that Eyelevel is on.

From the North End via Gottingen Street, visitors can take the #7 towards downtown, which stops across the street from Eyelevel 100 meters away.

From Mumford Terminal the #2 and #29 will stop within a 600-meter uphill walk on Barrington St. and Cornwallis Street, the #1, which will go through downtown before heading to Gottingen Street, can also be taken from Mumford Terminal.

Projects and Exhibition Presentations

Eyelevel programming occurs in spaces throughout the province. Eyelevel carries the access practices described below to all outside events and exhibitions we present. Details on facility accessibility will be posted alongside event descriptions on our website, newsletters and social media.

Programming

Access doulas

Performances and large public events will include paid or volunteer access doulas. Access doulas are present to support attendees in navigating the available access infrastructure or address emergent access needs. The presence of an access doula will be communicated in advance, and they will be visually designated with a nametag or t-shirt and introduced at the start of the event. The access doula is differentiated from an access coordinator, who plays a role in developing the access infrastructure and managing access logistics. Access doulas have an on-site only role.

All-ages programming

Unless otherwise specified, all events at Eyelevel are all-ages. Guardians and caregivers are invited to contact Eyelevel for further details on events they need to assess its kid-friendliness beyond any content warnings we provide. We do occasionally serve alcohol by donation, but will always accompany bar service with non-alcoholic drinks and snacks. Wonder'neath's Project Space, where we program most events, is clean, but not precious. Objects in our bookstore are meant to be explored and handled. Young children and toddlers are invited to explore Eyelevel's bookstore with supervision.

While not part of our current programming, Eyelevel is working on making child-minding services a part of our program offerings.

Allergies

As a public space, Eyelevel cannot guarantee our location is free of allergens. We discourage staff, board, volunteers, and guests from using scented products and offer pre-packaged food when catering that accommodates common dietary restrictions and allergens. 2482 Maynard Street is a low-scent building. First Aid Kits and Emergency Eye Wash Stations are on-site in the Wonder'neath Project Space. If you have severe allergies (particularly allergies to a service animal that may be present) please let us know in advance so that we can navigate conflicting access needs.

Anti-Oppression

Eyelevel wants to ensure our visitors and members feel safe, welcome, and comfortable in our spaces and events. We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind including but not limited to racism, ableism, ageism, sizeism, white supremacy, heterocentrism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, etc.

Eyelevel's staff and volunteers are expected to uphold our Code of Conduct and can face consequences, up to and including removal from their position, for actions which violate it whether or not those actions are during Eyelevel events or on-site at Eyelevel. Visitors and members who do not uphold Eyelevel's Code of Conduct will be reminded of the expectations we have for participating in Eyelevel events. Those who continue to cause harm will be asked to leave and may have membership revoked or attendance barred from future events. Eyelevel's staff takes trauma-first response and de-escalation training to help uphold our Code of Conduct in ways that focus on community accountability and mutual care.

Please read for further information: [POLICY: Code of Conduct \(2021\)](#)

Artist Involvement in Access

We approach access as an enriching endeavour that can and should be undertaken in collaboration with our artists. Often they have ideas, tools and contacts beyond our scope that allow us to expand our access practices and capacity as an organization. [Here are some of our current practices for collaborating with artists on access:](#)

Access Workshops

Each project's schedule will include a designated meeting to discuss the access infrastructure that will be incorporated in their project as well as their own access needs. This allows us to brainstorm the access needs audience members could have and discuss how access protocols can be incorporated into the artist's project in a way that augments the project's artistic goals. Additionally, this is a time for artists participating in cohort residencies or group exhibitions to share their own access needs and create collaborative ground rules for working together and sharing space.

Artist-created Image/Visual Descriptions

We invite artists to draft their own image descriptions for all promotional materials they send us so that their physical appearance and artwork are described with precision. Additionally, artists are invited to draft or record visually descriptive tours of their artwork for a small fee. These descriptions can accompany documentation that will live on our website and social media and will be available during the exhibition or performance as audio recordings audience members can access via an MP3 player or find on SoundCloud and play on their own devices.

Eyelevel's Artistic Co-Directors have limited experience writing image and audio descriptions and will provide guidance and resources to support artists creating this access content.

Artist-led or Advised Touch Tours

Eyelevel's staff will work with artists to build touch-tours of their work. When possible, these tours can be led by the artist (for example, a touch tour of the ephemera from a performance following that performance). When the artist isn't present or comfortable giving touch tours, Eyelevel's staff will gather guidance from the artist on what can be touched and how to create touch tours that can be carried out by staff or volunteers.

Artist-led Workshops

We invite artists to share their knowledge and experience with our broader community by creating workshops to increase the accessibility and reach of their projects, for which Eyelevel will issue the appropriate CARFAC-compliant fees to the artist. These workshops should take a form that correlates to the mediums or concepts of their project. Workshops designated exclusively for participants who identify with specific marginalized identities (e.g., closed spaces) are welcome.

Asynchronous Interactivity

Artists are invited to think about ways audience members can interact with their project digitally or in-person beyond conventional ways like artist talks. This could be community-sourced objects, materials, sounds, etc. incorporated into the project. It could also take the form of hashtags, zine creation, small takeaways, DIY kits or any means for audience members to contribute to or receive something from a project that doesn't require their presence at a specific time. This is created in a spirit of reciprocal collaboration centring audience experience rather than simply sourcing content for the artist's use.

Plain Language Artist Statements

Eyelevel will work with artists to draft plain language versions of artist statements or exhibition didactics following the Government of Canada's guidelines on plain language writing.

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

Bookstore, Office and Programming Protocols:

2482 Maynard Street is a building accessed by a group of around 20 artists and staff from Wonder'neath, Art Bikers, and Eyelevel regularly. These safety measures are specific to Eyelevel's programming and bookstore hours.

At this time, all visitors to Eyelevel's bookstore and programming participants must:

- Wear masks as required by all visitors to 2482 Maynard. Free respirator masks (KN95 and N95) are provided at all events.

- Eyelevel will have two Blueair Pure 211i Max air purifiers with HEPA and carbon filters working before, during, and after when hosting in-person events.
- We will have a CO2 monitor on-site.
- We will have hand sanitizer and Lysol wipes at the entrance of all of our events.
- Visitors are requested to rapid test before attending events, and to not attend any events if they are feeling sick, or have had a recent COVID-19/airborne illness exposure.

We will do our very best to accommodate the health and safety needs of our visitors.

- Staff wear respirator masks at all times while on-site and at Eyelevel events.
- Staff rapid test regularly and get PCR tests after travelling.
- Eyelevel has a flexible and generous sick leave policy which allows staff to take time off or work from home if they are feeling ill or have had a recent COVID-19 exposure
- Curbside pickup is available for online purchases, which can be booked here: <https://eyelevel.appointlet.com>

2177 Gottingen Street Covid safety protocols

- N95 respirator masks are available in the studios and are replenished regularly.
- There are two CR boxes each with four MERV 13 filters on both floors which remain on at all times.
- Lysol wipes are available on-site.
- There is a door that leads to a balcony that can be opened to improve ventilation.
- This space is not monitored and is not open to the public. When having public events masking is required.

If you require measures beyond our regular COVID-19 protocols, please let us know before your visit to Eyelevel. There is a space in our appointment booking section where you can ask for special measures to be taken by Eyelevel's staff to help you safely visit our space and pick up your bookstore order.

Financial Access

Eyelevel has no entrance fees during regular hours. The majority of our public programming is free to the public. Occasionally Eyelevel programs events and offers services on a PWYC (Pay What You Can) or by-donation basis. Eyelevel does not turn away visitors due to a lack of funds. We want visitors from all backgrounds to feel welcome at Eyelevel, including those who are systematically, sporadically, or temporarily facing financial barriers. Many of our in-house publications are PWYC, whereas the consignment items in our bookstore are priced by the artists, and are non-negotiable. Memberships to Eyelevel are also offered on a tiered system with a free/PWYC option. Studios are rented at cost.

Language

- Unless advertised otherwise, Eyelevel's programming and events are in English only, and staff members are only required to speak and write fluently in English.
- ASL interpretation and/or automated closed captioning on online platforms such as Zoom meetings, videos on social media and training videos are generally offered at events.
- Eyelevel aims to use plain language and clear communication in all correspondences and program support material.
- Braille, visual descriptions and translation are not currently a regular part of Eyelevel's programming.
- Eyelevel's publications are published primarily in English with some exceptions for thematically relevant languages.

Low scent

2482 Maynard Street

- No smoking in the event space or within 25 feet of the event entrance.
- Two Blueair Pure 211i Max air filtration systems with HEPA and carbon filters are on at full capacity before, during and after events, and during bookstore hours. Filters are replaced yearly.
- We check for off-gassing materials in the space.
- Before any event, we request that participants refrain from using strongly scented body products and smoking immediately before entering.
- Staff and volunteers will not wear heavily scented body products.
- Eyelevel does not manage cleaning in the building. An external cleaning company is contracted meaning we do not control the cleaning supplies used in the space.
- 2482 Maynard Street has an internal policy of not wearing patchouli-scented products.
- Smudging is permitted.

2177 Gottingen

- The studios are not well ventilated but the tenant contract states that it is prohibited to use toxic and/or have off-gassing materials in the space.
- There are two CR boxes each with four MERV 13 filters on both floors which are on at all times. Filters are replaced yearly.
- A door that leads to a balcony can be opened to improve ventilation.
- We have no rules around scented products in the studios.
- This may change if we have a tenant with chemical sensitivities.
- Smudging is permitted.

Our low-scent practices are communicated in advance to registered attendees and visiting artists and in our access notes for the general public. We include guides on scent-free approaches. We also acknowledge the strong possibilities of access friction and racialized aggression that can happen when enforcing low-scent environments. Unless necessary, our scent policies will only be enforced by gentle, general reminders rather than asking people to leave or wash. These practices regard toxic materials, body care products and smoking which can trigger allergic reactions and chemical injury. These practices do not apply to body odours and food.

Quiet spaces

Wonder'neath has a low-stimuli quiet room located next to the bookstore on the first floor of 2482 Maynard Street (enter through the Project Space) that is available during all events hosted in that space, including Eyelevel events.

Relaxed installation periods

- We will work with artists to determine a schedule that works for them. In addition, we can offer assistance in creating and managing the schedule.
- We will schedule longer than usual install periods. Allowing for troubleshooting, snack breaks and rest. We plan for 7-day install periods of six hours a day (including lunch breaks) as a standard, but longer installations can be accommodated at the artist's request.
- CARFAC installation fees are paid when project grant budgets allow.
- We will gather access support information for installation on the artist's access rider.
- Funding permitting, we work with trained installation technicians to support artists.
- Eyelevel's Co-Directors are experienced exhibition installers and many of the venues that we work with have their own trained technicians.

Relaxed space

At Eyelevel, we use principles of relaxed performances to make our spaces more comfortable and welcoming to disabled audience members, particularly those who are neurodivergent and have sensory, communication, and/or learning disabilities. By relaxing our bookstore, studio, and event spaces, we create environments which let bodies be bodies. People can arrive late, leave early, move around, make noise, sit or lie on the floor, and do whatever else they need to do to feel comfortable in our spaces. We also do our best to communicate what is going to happen at an event so people can prepare and attenuate their participation to ensure they continue to feel comfortable and relaxed throughout.

Below is an overview of some of the things we do to create a relaxed space:

Decompression space

During events where the intensity of subject matter is expected, Eyelevel has begun to provide a “decompression space” where stimulus is reduced, and seating is available if someone needs to take respite. We welcome visitors to use the low-sensory room at 2482 Maynard. This small room has low ceilings, a desk with chairs, two adjustable lights and a library. The low sensory room has its own door, however the door does have a large glass window. It is available for all events taking place in the Project Space.

Content Warnings

Eyelevel aims to notify visitors of possible triggering subject matter through the use of “content warnings.” This may include warnings about flashing lights, loud noises, violence, explorations of trauma, mental health, loss, death, human remains, graphic imagery, sexual content or nudity, etc. Content warnings are not an artistic or ethical judgment on what is being presented at Eyelevel, just a way for audience members to decide if a specific program is right for them. If you have questions about subject matter or images not included in content warnings, please contact staff for a more detailed description.

Active Listeners

When potentially triggering or activating content is programmed at Eyelevel, we work with trusted community members experienced in de-escalation and emotional support to serve as active listeners. While not trained therapists, active listeners are available to provide validation, an open ear, and resources on a strictly peer-to-peer basis when audience members are feeling activated and need someone to talk to.

Active listeners are not available at all Eyelevel events. When we plan to have one on-site their presence will be communicated in promotional materials and they will be introduced at the start of the event in addition to the expectations around using their services.

Relaxed performances

- When having performances Eyelevel will describe the space, what will happen during the performance and what can the audience expect. This will be published before the event.
- Avoid or communicate the presence of strobing/flashing lights.
- Dim lights at the venue.
- Sound will be kept between 60 - 80 decibels and we will communicate in our content warnings the presence of loud noises, sudden noises, high-pitches, droning and/or sudden volume changes.

- We will provide a decompression space in the venue.
- Audience members are free to come and go.
- We will select venues that are physically accessible and have good ventilation.

Service Animals

Service animals are always welcome in our space and events. Please let a staff member know if your service animal requires water or if you need directions to an area where they can relieve themselves. If you are attending an event or performance with your service animal, we appreciate knowing in advance to ensure they are comfortable and happy and to pre-empt/mitigate any conflicting access needs.

Touch tours

Eyelevel's staff will arrange touch tours for projects wherever possible. For visual art exhibitions, Eyelevel will gather approval and any guidance from the artist on conducting touch tours. Eyelevel staff will lead tours throughout the duration of the exhibition on a drop-in basis during open hours, or at specific times which will be communicated as part of the exhibition's promotions.

Touch tours of our bookstore are always available during our open hours and Eyelevel's Artistic Co-Directors are trained as sighted guides to support blind and partially-sighted visitors with safely navigating our space.

One-night events and performances may include touch tours before or after the event. These guided tours invite folks to touch costumes, sets, props, performance ephemera, etc. These will be arranged with the approval and guidance of the artists.

Workshops

The majority of our workshops and events take place in Wonder'neath's Project Space. The main door is automated and equipped with a bang bar automatic door opener to the left of the door, which leads to an interior vestibule, followed by a second bang bar door opener located on the right-hand side of the wall. This second door leads to the main Wonder'neath's Project Space. The door will be open for your visit. The space has a variety of sitting areas including tables and chairs, couches and a children's area. The overhead lights have a dimmer switch that allows you to adjust the brightness to your preference. The tables can be moved to accommodate any needs and the walkway toward the lift is kept clear.

Wonder'neath's Project Space is a multi-purpose community studio accessed by multiple organizations and groups. It can be visually stimulating and is designed to be a working space, allowing for messy processes. The Project Space is also a throughway for the accessibility lift

to the second floor and studio renters will pass through on their way up to their studios. ([more info here](#)).

Online Accessibility

Eyelevel makes use of accessible design for all online communications which include high-contrast images and infographics, readable fonts, image descriptions, plain-language communication and breaking down large amounts of information into small sections with clear headings.

Eyelevel uses Google Forms as an easy and accessible means of accepting submissions, all submissions are also accepted via email with questions/prompts and directions posted on our website to accommodate text-to-speech readers. Submissions in handwritten forms (available at our bookstore) and phone/zoom interviews are also accepted.

Eyelevel offers virtual options for programs whenever possible, and virtual events will be accompanied by ASL interpretation.

References and Acknowledgements

Eyelevel is located in Kijipuktuk (*Jeh-Book-Dook*), Mi'kma'ki (*Meeg-Mah-Gee*), the ancestral unceded and unsundered land of the Mi'kmaq (*Meeg-Mah*) and Wolastoqiyik (*Wool-Us-Too-We-Ig*). We are also a long-standing resident of the North End neighbourhood, which is on stolen land - as an arts organization we are a beneficiary of the North End's gentrification and the displacement of the Black, African Nova Scotian and Indigenous residents. As settlers and uninvited guests, we want to uphold our treaties by constantly questioning and working against the balance of power established by colonialism. We look to the Indigenous leaders and knowledge-keepers to uphold their past, present and future teachings.

Eyelevel gratefully acknowledges the expertise and brilliance of Eliza Chandler, who generously volunteered her time to help us put together this comprehensive document.

Eyelevel's access notes and access practices have been built over time by its current and past directors: Katie Belcher, Julia McMillan, Wren Tian, Cinthia Arias Auz and Sally Wolchyn-Raab, using access notes and policies from The Khyber Centre for the Arts, Wonder'neath Art Society and South House as guides. We also want to acknowledge Kay Macdonald/The Magic Project and OtherHeArts for their contribution to Eyelevel's access practices.

The following online resources are referenced in this guide:

2482 Maynard Access Guide developed by Wonder'neath Art Society

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YZ_kwIMHohsC4yPBzZm6lhvE9rIN2WcF7-RRSDBFYko/edit

An accessibility manifesto for the arts: <https://canadianart.ca/essays/access-revived/>

Access rider open template:

<https://disabilityarts.online/magazine/opinion/access-rider-open-template/>

Alt text as poetry: <https://alt-text-as-poetry.net/>

Blog post by Mia Mingus, discussing disability justice:

<https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/02/12/changing-the-framework-disability-justice/>

Blog post by Mia Mingus, discussing access intimacy:

<https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/05/05/access-intimacy-the-missing-link/>

Canada's plain language guide:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/topics/government-communications/communications-community-office/communications-101-boot-camp-canadian-public-servants/plain-language-accessibility-inclusive-communications.html>

Creating accessible documents:

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/creating-accessible-documents-0#simple-table-of-contents-13>

Creative Connector, an online arts hub for Deaf and Disabled artists and creatives:

<https://www.creativeconnector.art/>

Crippling the Arts Access Guide:

<https://tangledarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/cta-access-guide-spreads-digital.pdf>

Disability Justice Principles:

<https://arcminnesota.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Plain-Language-Disability-Justice-Principles.pdf>

Elwood Jimmy's Access(sen)sibility definition:

<https://www.artseverywhere.ca/translation/#jimmy>

Exhibition using vibrational haptics: <https://bodiesintranslation.ca/admiring-all-we-accomplish>

Eyelevel Land Acknowledgement Developed by Carrie Allison Payiw:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RD18zqyBI9z0TxW2_MN0IZM6AYx3aMxZLtUQskU8Ce0/edit?usp=sharing

Fragrance-free femme of colour guide:

<https://brownstargirl.org/fragrance-free-femme-of-colour-genius/>

Guide on image descriptions:

<https://uxdesign.cc/how-to-write-an-image-description-2f30d3bf5546>

Haptic Voices: <https://hapticvoices.com/>

Ideal practices working with deaf performers:

<https://deafspectrum.com/ideal-practices-working-with-deaf-performers/>

Interview with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha:

<https://www.autostraddle.com/sins-invalids-birthing-dying-becoming-crip-wisdom-features-crip-art-activism-love-and-liberation-354749/>

Interview with Sin Invalid:

<https://www.autostraddle.com/sins-invalids-birthing-dying-becoming-crip-wisdom-features-crip-art-activism-love-and-liberation-354749/>

Relaxed Performance Booklet:

<https://bodiesintranslation.ca/relaxed-performance-exploring-accessibility-in-the-canadian-theatre-landscape/>

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We gratefully acknowledge the expertise of the disability justice advocates whose work informs this guide and Eyelevel's access practices:

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