

Invisible Exhibition

The Invisible Exhibition in Budapest is an extraordinary journey to a world, where in total darkness you find your way only by touch, sounds and scent.

We had the chance to visit this exhibition with our exchange students in February 2018, and we all agree that it was quite an experience as it was exciting and emotive at the same time.



I would say there were two main parts of the exhibition. Since the maximum amount of people who could go in to 'see' it at a time was 10, we split up in two groups; a group of the Belgian students, whose guide used English, and a group of the Hungarian students.

While waiting for our turn we could experience some of the challenges a blind person has to cope with at first hand. There was a few meters long maze in the hall, which we had to walk through blind-folded with the help of a stick. Not everyone tried it, but those who did said it was not easy at all.

Then came the first part of our visit and it was fascinating as we finally got to understand something most of us have already wondered about before. How do blind people read and write - by using the so-called Braille writer. It's a system of making raised dots on paper to form letters and words that are readable by using your fingertips. It seemed a little complicated at first, but then I realised that's it is actually super easy and a brilliant idea.

We all tried to use this method, by typing our names, or any word. We were chatting with a lady who wasn't completely blind, but almost. She told us what we should expect in the second part of the exhibition.

We talked about how we might help blind people in the streets or in the city if they need it, which in my opinion was pretty obvious but it was still useful to discuss it.

There are points that one may not think of such as the principle that **you should always ask first** if the blind person needs any help at all and the rule that **you must never take their arm** but you should tell the blind person clearly on which side of them you are and **allow them to take your arm** instead.



The second part, the main 'attraction' of the exhibition was a completely dark room which we entered with our group and a blind tour guide.

First, we had to walk through a hallway, staying closely behind each other with one hand on the wall. It was pretty exciting and we were really curious at that point already. Our guide then introduced himself. He walked us to different rooms, where we could only 'look around' by touching things and trying to guess what they were. Some things were pretty obvious, but with others, we had trouble figuring out what they were, so when our guide told us, we were quite surprised. For example there was a room with statues, and we would have never guessed that one of them was a Disney character.



There was also an area where a street of a city was recreated. We could hear the sounds of a traffic jam. Other than these places, we actually walked through rooms of a house like a bathroom and a kitchen and even a hunting lodge with antlers on the walls. The last 'stop' was at a bar where we could sit down and just chat with our tour guide.

We learned how the life of a blind person is different from a non-blind person's. Of course the fact that they cannot see with their eyes makes it difficult, but with some help they can easily learn things and lead relatively "normal" lives. We, people with sight, can help them first of all by just simply being open-minded and accepting that blind people are like us in more ways than not! Advances in technology, such as smart and talking devices also help the blind a lot these days. This was my second time at the exhibition and I personally really enjoyed both visits! So did the other students, as we talked about our experience later.

I definitely recommend the exhibition to everyone. You will truly enjoy it if you want to get to understand others more and get a glimpse of others' lives, and who would not be interested in that?



by Nóra Pátrovics
Hungary