

Press release

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## **The Valentin Haüy Association and the Musée d'Orsay reveal "Tell Me What You See" for World Sight Day**

- In France, nearly 2 million people are with impaired vision (low vision and blindness). Visual impairment is an invisible disability that very often leads to a loss of independence and social isolation.
- Due to an increasing life expectancy and an ageing population, the World Health Organisation predicts that the number of visually impaired people will double in the next 25 years.
- The Valentin Haüy Association and the Musée d'Orsay are aware of these issues and have joined forces to offer visitors to the museum a surprising, immersive experience: "Tell me what you see". For World Sight Day on 13 October 2022, they reveal what visitors have to say...

### **Visual impairment: Growing in prevalence and with a strong impact on quality of life**

- In France, nearly 2 million people have impaired vision, which makes up nearly 3% of the population. This figure tends to increase along with life expectancy and the ageing population. All available epidemiological data show that the prevalence of visual impairment increases significantly with age beyond 60 years old.

The main causes of visual impairment are untreated visual disorders, cataracts, glaucoma, or AMD (Age-related Macular Degeneration), which the leading cause of visual impairment in people over 50 years old<sup>1</sup>.

Among the visually impaired, 207,000 are blind and profoundly visually impaired, and 932,000 are moderately visually impaired. But they all have one thing in common: the visual impairment caused by this disability can have consequences on quality of life, such as reduced or even lost independence, impaired mobility and isolation. Although the level of visual impairment can vary greatly, the extent of the disability is not proportional to the extent of the impairment.

### **World Sight Day: Art through the eyes of a visually impaired person**

To bring to light the often invisible disability caused by visual impairment and to raise awareness among the general public, the Valentin Haüy association has set up a unique immersive event in the heart of the Musée d'Orsay, with a surprising new operation: to make visitors to the museum experience visually impairment through one of the most famous paintings in the world, Vincent Van Gogh's Self-Portrait.

1. <https://www.inserm.fr/dossier/degenerescence-maculaire-liee-age-dmla/>

The "Tell Me What You See" campaign does more than just raising awareness, it **reveals what it means to be visually impaired**. Because visual impairment does not only make you lose your bearings. People affected may find it difficult to talk about their disability, their fear of going blind, their concerns that they will not be able to live "like they used to". Worse still is the fear that others will not understand them, leading to isolation and much more challenging consequences with repercussions on daily, social and professional life.

**Although it is easy to understand visual impairment, it is more complicated to realise that our loved ones are suffering from it.**

### The "Tell Me What You See" experience in images

With "Tell Me What You See", visitors to the Musée d'Orsay were shown 3 types of visual impairment associated with 4 pathologies responsible for loss of vision. Today, for World Sight Day, Valentin Haüy and the Musée d'Orsay are revealing the reactions of visitors to the general public, which are surprising to say the least... A successful bet? Discover below the types of visual impairment, and the video reactions on the website [www.dismoicequetuvois.com](http://www.dismoicequetuvois.com)



#### **Loss of central vision**, mainly caused by **AMD**.

AMD (Age-related Macular Degeneration) is an eye disease that affects the macula, which is the central area of the retina. It is the main cause of visual impairment in the elderly.

It appears after the age of 50 and develops gradually. When at an advanced stage, the person affected can no longer see in the centre of their field of vision (this is called limited



#### **Loss of peripheral vision**, which can be caused by **retinitis pigmentosa**.

Retinitis pigmentosa is a rare genetic disease characterised by a degeneration of the retinal cells. It affects both men and women, and occurs mainly between the ages of 10 and 30, although it can develop at any time in life. People with retinitis pigmentosa usually develop night blindness at first and then a peripheral visual field impairment. Over time, the central vision is also impaired.



#### **A mixed deficit**, which may be caused by:

**Diabetic retinopathy:** This is a serious complication of diabetes that affects 50% of type 2 diabetics. The excess of sugar in the blood weakens and then causes the rupture of the retinal vessels. The macula eventually thickens, leading to degraded visual acuity. People with this disease may experience a sudden drop in visual acuity, a steady black spot in their field of vision or distorted lines.



**Glaucoma:** This chronic eye disease is characterised by damage to the optic nerve. Glaucoma affects 1-2% of the population over the age of 40 and about 10% over the age of 70. Around 800,000 people are treated for it in France, but 400,000 to 500,000 are believed to have the disease without knowing it. Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in France, after AMD.

**To find out more, please visit:**

[www.dismoicequetuvois.com](http://www.dismoicequetuvois.com)

<https://www.mieuxvivresamalvoyance.com>

### **About the Valentin Haüy Association**

The Valentin Haüy (pronounced "A-U-I") Association was created in 1889 by Maurice de La Sizeranne and recognised as an official non-profit organisation in 1891. It has been supporting and accompanying visually impaired people for over 130 years to help them become more independent. Its missions are made possible by public generosity. It is based in more than 120 local premises and supported by around 3,300 volunteers to pursue its goal: To work as closely as possible with blind and visually impaired people in order to help them break out of their isolation and lead an active and independent lifestyle.

### **About the Musée d'Orsay**

Brought together within the Public Establishment of the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée de l'Orangerie - Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (EPMO), the mission of these two museums is to present to the public, in their historical perspective, works of art from the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the collections of the Musée de l'Orangerie.

The EPMO is aware of its social role and has an ambitious public policy for all visitors, whatever their age, difficulties, geographical or social origin, to discover the collections of the two museums. It aims to adapt the information to each audience, and to reach out to those who would not naturally come to the museum, by creating new mediation offers or through partnerships targeting a wide variety of audiences. In this respect, the EPMO pays particular attention to visually impaired visitors, for whom it offers specially adapted tour aids (e.g. audio-guide with audio description), as well as a range of tours with audio-description or tactile elements that are frequently renewed.

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