

**Michał Justycki**

**The summary  
of the PhD  
thesis**

**Academy  
of Fine  
Arts  
in Katowice  
2023**

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I work at the Silesian Museum as an educator and I am bringing the art closer to the d/Deaf community. Currently, the subject of art is scarcely known amongst the d/Deaf people due to the lack of education about art in Polish Sign Language.

Education on art in Polish Sign Language is crucial for d/Deaf children and adults. d/Deaf people in Poland have insufficient knowledge about this subject, even to the point where they do not like the art and think it is boring. Why do art should interest them if the information is provided in a not accessible way? It could be compared to the hearing people learning something new in, for example, Chinese language which they do not know. It does not matter how interesting the topic is. Without accessing information in their native tongue, even the best and the most interesting topic can wear the recipients. If the teachers in the schools for d/Deaf could speak the sign language, the situation would look completely different.

The education of the d/Deaf in Poland, which is hard to believe in, is tragic. Not focusing strictly on lacking knowledge on art, it has to be stated with all honesty, that deaf people have limited vocabulary related to the differentiation of emotions and they do not know the colours/shades which could express emotions. Hence, it is important to let deaf people express themselves through art classes and extend knowledge in the field of art.

In the schools for the deaf and hard-of-hearing most of the teachers do not use the sign language. As a result, children are missing a lot of information on various topics, including art. Comparing d/Deaf and hearing children at the same age, who is more likely to have broader knowledge? Undoubtedly the hearing children as the information they receive is available in an accessible language. Education of the d/Deaf in Poland, as mentioned before and will be mentioned on several occasions, is on a very poor level as the information is not provided to deaf children in their native tongue, the Polish Sign Language. Personally, I do not believe the d/Deaf do not like visiting museums and are not willing to develop artistically. Everything falls back to education. If education is done properly, then d/Deaf would fall in love with art.

In my PhD thesis, I would like to explore the issue – explain more precisely why lack of communication in the sign language at schools for deaf children is catastrophic. Especially, given the sign language is usually their first language. Without a language, as it is known, there is no communication. Moreover, teachers using the Polish Sign Language would help deaf children extending the vocabulary connected with art education amongst them. The sign language is beneficial for

good education of the d/Deaf people.

The aim of the PhD thesis is bringing the world of the d/Deaf closer to the general public. The society knows little about the d/Deaf people and yet the deaf community is diverse and so abundant. The main questions on which I will do my utmost to provide the answers are: Who the d/Deaf people are? Could the d/Deaf people become scientists, artists or writers? What do you think? Were they? I will answer simply – yes, of course there were outstanding d/Deaf people, but little is written about them. Why? There is no information about the history of d/Deaf, especially the history of d/Deaf artists. Why the schools for d/Deaf and hard of hearing children do not teach much about the history of the Deaf artist and their art? What does it interfere with? Is it inconvenient for the hearing society? How does the d/Deaf Art looks like? And much more other interesting aspects.

The PhD thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter starts with the explanation of communicational problems of the deaf people and what are the difficulties in their daily life and how to overcome them. I give a detailed explanation on what the sign language is, as well as the history of the language.

My work experience as a deaf educator in the Silesian Museum is given in the second chapter. I describe the problems I came across while showing the groups (deaf people) around the museum, guidelines on how to communicate with d/Deaf visitors and how to provide information to them so it is received clearly. Furthermore, I am comparing the sign language with the language of gestures and present educational programmes addressed to d/Deaf visitors implemented in the Museum. The chapter finishes with detailed description of the Polish Sign Language in cultural institutions, including the museum environment.

The third chapter is based on the Silesian Museums' activities directed to the deaf people community. It includes events such as seminars, conferences about the art of the d/Deaf, including the series of the seminar "Sztuka łączenia". I talk about the inclusion programmes created in the Museum and the exceptional exhibition "Głusza" opened in the 2022. Thanks to the actions and the exhibition we may disseminate knowledge about the Deaf Art, which is a separate trend in the art of the d/Deaf. In the next part of the chapter the accessibility of the sign language in museum is described and how important it is to enable deaf people to develop in the field of culture and art. The fourth chapter is the most extensive which was focused on the main aspect of the PhD thesis which includes the information on Deaf Culture and the history of the d/Deaf which are extremely important

for the community, but lacks information on it. The international research outcomes on sign language are presented. In addition, De'VIA movement is described in details, the history of its beginnings and the development across the years. Then the idea of activism is presented together with the Deafhood concept. The chapter is finished with the contemporary d/Deaf artists' work analysis including the explanation of Deaf Art motifs used in the analysed pieces of art. The information is not disseminated widely, but there are a lot of talented d/Deaf artist which the society is not aware of. Sadly, the creations of d/Deaf artists is being depreciated by the society. Therefore, this PhD thesis' aim is to make the society aware and present them the excellent art of the d/Deaf. The last chapter gives explanation about the incentive for creating the second part of the PhD thesis which is the art dictionary in sign languages "Słownik sztuki w językach migowych". I discuss the reason behind creating it, technicalities like the website that accompanies the publication, illustrations or recording videos in sign language. Specifically the work methodology used for preparing the PhD thesis, the technics used. This is the essence of the entire dictionary.