

# Question Access: Standard Access Against Access Art

by The Curiosity Paradox

Published, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Revision 2.0, July, 12<sup>th</sup> 2022.

[Water trickling throughout.]

Access Art describes the ways marginalized people and communities creatively grow resources, design accessibility, celebrate joy and resistance, out-manuever supremacy culture, and dream worlds beyond the impossible.

In the process of defining [Access Art](#), we have placed it against what we refer to as [Standard Access](#). By placing these two ideas side-by-side, the resistance between them further defines the other.

This is a conversation starter to provoke discussion and learning. We invite you to contact us at [work@TheCuriosityParadox.com](mailto:work@TheCuriosityParadox.com) if you would like to discuss.

## Who leads?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) is led by code enforcers, non-Disabled experts, underpaid staff, and workers without training. It is made by those who are not impacted by the access they are creating and lack lived experience of Disability.

Access Art is led by activists, artists, poets, dancers, dreamers, institutional change-makers, consultants, and engineers who are marginalized. It is made by and with the leadership of those who directly benefit from the access that is created.

## What future is being dreamed?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) dreams of futures where Disability no longer exists in public or is sidelined, hidden.

Access Art dreams futures where the presence of Disabled and marginalized people are core to the aesthetic of a beautiful, thriving public life.

## How are people treated?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) makes Disabled people better workers and consumers.

Access Art respects Disabled and marginalized people as experts in lived experience.

## What is the aesthetic?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) defines "neutral" and "normal" for those in power. It strives toward an aesthetic where accessibility is unintrusive or hidden from people whose needs are already met.

Access Art has a specific flair that emerges based on who is present. It opens multiple ways of naming, defining, interpreting, translating, and creating across space and time. Features like captions, audio description, gender neutral bathrooms, language translation, financial support, ramps, accessible paths, as well as imaginative and unique forms are proactively, aesthetically prioritized.

## How does it feel?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) is implemented to avoid lawsuits and financial ruin. It is felt as an unappealing, burdensome barrier to "real" art, business, and culture.

Access Art involves cultural spaces with robust variation. Process, comfort, and play are prioritized. It is felt as a beautiful relief to draining ways of doing things.

## What is prioritized?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) is tacked on at the end, after the fact. No time to learn. Maintains urgency. Implemented as workers run on empty. Standard access prioritizes the pace of institutions and bureaucracy over people.

Access Art is imagined before, during, and after the fact. Learning comes from repetition and change. Carefully planned, and simultaneously spontaneous. Time and capacity are respected and honored sustainably. Access Art compensates and resources those involved.

## How are things decided?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) includes rules about space, time, and agenda that are informal, hidden, or imposed. Often hierarchical, and shaped by funders and bosses, as well as so-called specialists and experts. People with the most power choose the rules.

Access Art includes rules about space, time, and agenda that are flexible, transparent, and adapted to meet the needs of those present. People with the most needs help negotiate the rules. May operate by consensus, delegation of authority, vote by majority, chance, or a mix of each.

## How are people held accountable?

Standard access (eugenic legacy) upholds punitive accountability. It is enforced through fear, grievance, complaints, archaic legal codes, and financial coercion by those who can afford it.

Access Art practices transformative accountability and change as acts of love, respect, and collaboration. It is committed to adaptive, relational, interdependent change over time and learning together from failure.

## **Where is access practiced?**

Standard access (eugenic legacy) only allows Disabled people access to public spaces that are regulated by state and economic power structures, or whoever is in charge. Allows people in power to avoid taking responsibility for harm and exclusion.

Access Art can happen in public, private, and in-between places. It allows many kinds of spaces to exist and prosper. Those in power see their job as lifting up the solutions and expertise of Disabled and marginalized people. Centers repair and conciliation.

## **Whose needs are met?**

Standard access (eugenic legacy) hoards power and invites Disabled and marginalized people to participate in inaccessible, privileged spaces that mainly benefit the needs of non-Disabled and non-marginalized people.

Access Art centers the movement and growth of shared resources and opportunities so that Disabled and marginalized people's physical and emotional needs can be met.

This work is available under a Creative Commons SY-BA 4.0 License. You may share or adapt this work with credit to The Curiosity Paradox.