From our eyes to our ears - the stories of art – part 2

Podcast transcript

# Welcome and Introduction

[00:00:00] **Jacqui:** Calling all creatives, advocates, and friends. Welcome to the next chapter of this ever-growing content journey. This is your space. If stories are for you, this is Community Matters Media.

[00:00:24] **Jacqui:** Hello, it's Jacqui here.

# Reintroducing Sarah Empey

[00:00:28] **Jacqui:** So today I'm taking great pleasure in reintroducing you to my beautiful friend Sarah Empey.

[00:00:38] **Sarah:** Thank you Jacqui for having me.

[00:00:40] **Jacqui:** We are so glad to have Sarah back. For part two of this conversation that was brought to you by our friends at AT Chat and it couldn't have been made possible without their encouragement, their belief, their co-design, and a love for all things assistive technology and storytelling.

[00:01:03] **Jacqui:** From our eyes to our ears, the stories of art, episode two, season four. So if you can hang with me until the end of this episode, I've got a special surprise waiting for you. Watch this space.

# The Art of Storytelling and Production

[00:01:25] **Sarah:** Doing this podcast with you is, is a huge production. I mean, I come from the world in my background with bit of theater.

[00:01:32] **Sarah:** I mean, I was a banker, but I love being in the theater, and I love being behind the scenes and I find doing the audio descriptions is like being behind the scenes and just working on this last exhibition, 'You're Welcome', it's everything that's happening at the 11th hour to pull it all together the whole night.

[00:01:48] **Sarah:** It's fantastic.

[00:01:49] **Jacqui:** That's why I knew we'd be amazing, even if we just showed up today as our whole selves and just winged it, which I feel like sometimes I do and I don't reveal that because other people get nervous, but that's when I become amazing and I'm like, yes. It's just, it's meant to be because you just, you feel it.

[00:02:09] **Jacqui:** It was, and I felt like we just built that up. That excitement, that mutual excitement and passion and shared drive, that I knew that whatever we created was gonna be wonderful and authentic and creative and beautiful. And I am not disappointed.

[00:02:25] **Sarah:** I'm not disappointed at all. And what I also like is that you add your own story to it as well.

[00:02:31] **Sarah:** I, I mean, I like talking about what I do, but sometimes it's like, I don't want it to be all about me. You know, when you go and meet someone for the first time, you're like, I don't wanna talk about myself the entire time. So I, I think you're so good to add your own stories to it, your own insights to keep the conversation going.

[00:02:45] **Sarah:** Like, you're very good at that. And it was so conversational, but it's just amazing. Like, all that time goes fast, but we learn so much.

[00:02:52] **Jacqui:** We do. We do. And you know, like I've been so excited working with lots of different people over the course of my career, and I know that you could say the same thing as well.

[00:03:01] **Jacqui:** Like the more people you encounter and the more people you learn from, the better you get the best aha moment where you're like, yes, this is amazing. Why haven't I always been doing this? Hooray.

[00:03:13] **Sarah:** It was funny, my, one of my colleagues went back and she had a look at some of the original ones that we had written, and she goes, oh, we've come a long way.

[00:03:20] **Sarah:** And I'm like, oh, interesting. You know, because you get into a routine and a, and a format and you just go from there.

# The Human Touch vs. AI

[00:03:25] **Sarah:** Did you listen to it?

[00:03:26] **Jacqui:** I'm loving it. I'm just loving hearing a real person, not just AI. Yeah, it's so different. My gosh, I hate AI. It's so robotic. I just give me a person, you know, like just hearing the inflection in, in their voice and their tone and where they place the importance and the passion and the emotion.

[00:03:48] **Jacqui:** You, you can't, you can't dehumanize that. That's the element of being human and telling that story.

[00:03:55] **Sarah:** And that's like same with an AI description.

[00:03:58] **Jacqui:** Mm-hmm.

[00:03:58] **Sarah:** They can describe stuff, but it doesn't sound as emotional or connected or it was like the piece of the five pine trees and the sun. It just makes it sound more story-like than clinical.

[00:04:11] **Sarah:** I'll be doing this for a while longer, which is good.

[00:04:14] **Jacqui:** No, but that's good. That's good because there's clearly a need for it. And you know, like I think there's a big conversation around people saying, what place does AI have in this world? And I've really raged internally with that battle within myself about understanding AI's place in creative works and technology and all of that.

[00:04:33] **Jacqui:** And in terms of not replacing that creative component, because that's the core of what makes us human is to create. Yes. So I don't think what I do and what other creatives do can ever be replaced. It is just not possible because there's the absence.

[00:04:50] **Sarah:** I mean, wouldn't be capacity otherwise.

[00:04:51] **Jacqui:** Yes. Yeah.

[00:04:52] **Sarah:** Like you said, that's our livelihoods.

[00:04:53] **Jacqui:** Yeah.

[00:04:53] **Sarah:** So it makes us human. Um, I, I really agree with that.

[00:04:56] **Jacqui:** Yeah. That'd be wonderful. Just to augment what we've talked about. Yeah.

[00:04:59] **Sarah:** Yeah. So cool. And technique and...

[00:05:02] **Jacqui:** Yeah. Yeah. Oh, well that's good. Learning teaching. Yeah. Always, always learning. I love it. Yeah.

[00:05:08] **Jacqui:** I love it. I love it. You know what?

[00:05:10] **Sarah:** Yes, you do.

[00:05:10] **Jacqui:** I could see, well, I, I could see like the podcast of art galleries.

[00:05:15] **Jacqui:** Just everything is like the catalog is audio described. That would be so cool. Yeah. That would be evergreen.

[00:05:21] **Sarah:** Yeah. So it's like, wow, how cool is that? Yeah. So big.

[00:05:26] **Jacqui:** That is so cool. Yes. Now that's great content.

[00:05:29] **Sarah:** Yeah.

[00:05:31] **Jacqui:** I love that. I love that. And you know what?

# The Value of Authenticity in Creative Work

[00:05:32] **Jacqui:** The true authenticity of your work will speak for itself all the time.

[00:05:37] **Jacqui:** So it's always worthwhile doing, even if it is just to be truly you and authentically you. It has a purpose. So much more than just feeling good about what you're bringing to the world.

[00:05:47] **Sarah:** Oh, yeah. That's why to mention the mascara on my eye. Like, I like you. You saw it right away. And I said, that's what communication's all about.

[00:05:54] **Sarah:** Yeah. This is what people notice and it's good to chat. I thought it kind of humanizes the whole situation, so I thought that was quite funny.

[00:06:00] **Jacqui:** No, no, no. That was great. I loved it. Very conversational. Yeah, and very organic, which is, yeah, everything that I like to talk about. So exciting. Amazing. Yes, yes. And you know what?

[00:06:14] **Sarah:** I don't think we could make a living out of it as per se. Yeah. But we're very lucky that my colleagues and I have work come to us.

[00:06:21] **Jacqui:** Mm.

[00:06:22] **Sarah:** So we don't have to do a lot of marketing and looking for work. We, we kind of have a reputation where they come to us or we've been. Hired again by the same art museums and galleries.

[00:06:32] **Sarah:** So it's a quite a nice collaboration. You know, it, it's a really kind of not, not to say that no one's on our side, but you know, you get to work with people and you know, you work well with people and they become calling again, which is lovely.

[00:06:43] **Jacqui:** Well, that's it. And you know, I really feel like when you put your whole self into projects like you and I clearly do, you know, people remember when we go the extra mile and they don't take advantage of it because they see our authenticity.

[00:06:57] **Jacqui:** And they see our passion and our vision, and they want to work with us. And they don't just hire you because you've got the skills. It's clearly that you are aligned morally and ethically, and those are the only people I wanna work with these days. I'm just, I'm done with working with people who just don't have, they don't share the same values.

[00:07:15] **Sarah:** That's so true.

[00:07:16] **Sarah:** Very important, because you don't need extra stress. No one needs that. No, no.

[00:07:21] **Jacqui:** Absolutely not. I have a bit of a fun exercise that wasn't actually anything I talked about, but I was excited about it while I, while we were talking and, um, bonding and all the exciting stuff.

# Describing Iconic Paintings

[00:07:34] **Jacqui:** I thought it would be really fun if you and I described a painting that everybody knows to see how

[00:07:41] **Sarah:** Oh, okay.

[00:07:42] **Sarah:** I could, yeah.

[00:07:42] **Jacqui:** Like a bit of a live description.

[00:07:45] **Sarah:** Oh, okay. Sure.

[00:07:46] **Jacqui:** Try to see how we see things differently. What do you think?

[00:07:49] **Sarah:** Okay, sure. Alright.

[00:07:51] **Jacqui:** Is there the time

[00:07:52] **Sarah:** I'm up for it,

[00:07:52] **Jacqui:** a painting that you think that would be one of those things that everyone knows? I'm thinking of some of the greats.

[00:08:00] **Sarah:** Well, I, I'm thinking of Van Gogh.

[00:08:02] **Jacqui:** I was thinking. Starry night, were you thinking? No. Ah, amazing. Amazing. That's so exciting. I was totally thinking that and I'm like, is she gonna go with it and do I say sunflowers or do I just jump to Monet? I wasn't sure, but this is very exciting. Starry Night is, is gorgeous.

[00:08:18] **Sarah:** Um, do you have it up on the screen?

[00:08:20] **Jacqui:** I do, and what I can do is I can probably share it, which would be, Ooh, if we have permission share,

[00:08:28] **Sarah:** I can give you the process of what we go through.

[00:08:30] **Jacqui:** Oh, I can share. Oh, how exciting. Okay. Yay.

[00:08:33] **Sarah:** Yay. Oh, technology

[00:08:35] **Jacqui:** so good. So good. So good. I'm just gonna bring up Starry night and then I can share it. This is so exciting because I'm hoping that it comes up and it will be filmed as well, like as I'm anticipating it will be,

[00:08:51] **Sarah:** oh, are you doing starry night or are you doing sun flowers?

[00:08:54] **Jacqui:** Starry night. I got, I got sidetracked. Sorry.

[00:08:57] **Sarah:** Okay. Yeah. Is this one I'm not familiar with?

[00:08:59] **Jacqui:** So, oh, oh, hang on, hang on. I thought you said you were, oh, no. Is this better that you're, it's,

[00:09:03] **Sarah:** it's, no, no. It's sun sunflowers I'm aware of just 'cause it's such a beautifully vibrant one, which I knew before, but Starry night.

[00:09:10] **Sarah:** This could be good, because this will give you an idea of what I ask my colleagues to describe to me if I'm not sure if I'm getting it.

[00:09:17] **Jacqui:** Oh, oh, okay. Okay. All right. I'm very excited about that. Amazing. Yes. Okay, because I, I wondered whether having the prejudice, well, not the prejudice, but you know, like the, the knowledge prior and knowing, like, knowing what it looks like.

[00:09:31] **Jacqui:** Yeah,

[00:09:32] **Sarah:** yeah. True. Yeah.

[00:09:32] **Jacqui:** Okay. I'll just, um,

[00:09:34] **Sarah:** exactly. So this is gonna be the true test. Ooh. So I do, I am familiar with this one, but not. All the details, so not the way you're gonna describe it to me.

[00:09:42] **Jacqui:** Okay. Okay, here we go.

[00:09:45] **Jacqui:** Oh, am I sharing it yet?

[00:09:47] **Sarah:** Um, there's a dot, but I can't tell if that's a painting or,

[00:09:51] **Jacqui:** Ooh, let me just see if I can make it full.

[00:09:53] **Jacqui:** Um, I'm just gonna zoom in. Just bear with me a moment. Can you see it on the screen?

[00:10:02] **Sarah:** It's a very, that's a very deep question.

[00:10:07] **Sarah:** Um, I'm, I'm actually not quite sure what I'm looking at, but I can see a circle.

[00:10:12] **Jacqui:** Oh no. If you are familiar with sunflowers, maybe. Maybe in case. 'cause it's quite small. If you can't see it, maybe we should go Sunflowers. What do you think?

[00:10:21] **Sarah:** Um, it's up to you. It's up to you. 'cause I'll, I'll just ask, walk you through it what I need to know.

[00:10:26] **Jacqui:** Let's bring it up because I am. Yeah. Yeah. Well this is something that's iconic that everybody knows. Of course.

[00:10:34] **Sarah:** Yeah. Alright. So if they're not familiar with it, you probably have seen it. You're just not aware of the name.

[00:10:39] **Jacqui:** But if they're not familiar with it, if they're not familiar, maybe they should like go and view it.

[00:10:45] **Jacqui:** Yeah. Right now.

[00:10:50] **Sarah:** Because I kind of know it. You, you tell me first, what is the image that jumps out to you first?

[00:10:57] **Jacqui:** Okay.

[00:10:57] **Sarah:** I don't think it's up on the screen.

[00:10:59] **Jacqui:** Do you see the image? Do you see it on the screen?

[00:11:03] **Sarah:** Is this what they call moving pictures? I love it.

[00:11:07] **Jacqui:** Hello? Hello? Hello. Oh, there we go. Oh, sorry about that. Yeah, I think because I shared it, it it went away, so that's very sad.

[00:11:14] **Jacqui:** But that's okay. I've got the, I've got the image. Have you got the image?

[00:11:17] **Sarah:** I, I think so. I can see something square.

[00:11:20] **Jacqui:** Okay.

[00:11:20] **Sarah:** So, so it looks like it's on a white wall, is that correct?

[00:11:23] **Jacqui:** Yes, yes, that's correct.

[00:11:25] **Sarah:** Okay, got it.

[00:11:25] **Jacqui:** Sorry. It's, um,

[00:11:26] **Sarah:** So sometimes we describe the background too. 'cause sometimes, um, a curator or the artist will pick a color, uh, for the work to be hung on, and it can be quite dramatic.

[00:11:35] **Sarah:** So we, we sometimes doesn't, not always, but sometimes we do mention the color of the wall.

[00:11:40] **Jacqui:** Okay.

[00:11:40] **Sarah:** Which it's on.

[00:11:41] **Jacqui:** Should I, should I describe what I see first or do you want to go first?

[00:11:46] **Sarah:** For me, I can just see like a yellow blob. That's all I see. But, and I can't see much,

[00:11:51] **Jacqui:** but, you know, but you know the painting though.

[00:11:54] **Sarah:** I do. Yeah.

[00:11:55] **Jacqui:** So, um, so what

[00:11:56] **Sarah:** I would ask you mm-hmm. What is the most visual thing on there?

[00:11:59] **Jacqui:** Um, so. Actually, I do notice, I noticed the background. Um, I noticed that it's been carved with a pallet knife, um, a very fine one. So it looks like it could be, I can't remember the medium, but it does look like oil. I know you could achieve the same look with acrylics, but building up, but it does look like oil.

[00:12:22] **Jacqui:** It looks quite rough, but controlled. So it looks like they've created some kind of herring bone pattern with a pallet knife. So it's quite interesting, but you'd have to look quite closely at the canvas to notice it. So that's a blue background and it makes me think of, uh, the sky. So it could be a wall, but I reckon it's probably representative of the sky.

[00:12:48] **Jacqui:** And another clear thing that I notice is the center of the flowers, which are quite dark around the center because some of the other flowers, um, are a bit more yellow and dull and subtle in their tones, whereas three of the flowers towards the top right hand side are quite dark and dramatic, and some of the other flowers are not actually open at all.

[00:13:12] **Jacqui:** I also love and appreciate the chaos of the flowers because they're not pristine. And that's what I love about artistic, um, uh, artistic work in, uh, foliage and nature. Because it doesn't have to be symmetrical. It doesn't have to be perfect. You don't want it to be, 'cause you're celebrating imperfections.

[00:13:34] **Jacqui:** So some of the flowers look like maybe they've fallen away and they're no longer vibrant and full of life, but they're still included in the art. They're still seen as beautiful. And some of the flowers, um, they've lost all the petal, but all they are is, uh, sharp, jaggedy, um, spikes of green. But that's also interesting as well.

[00:13:56] **Jacqui:** And some of them look less like sunflowers. They look a little bit like dahlias, so they're quite light and puffy, and there doesn't appear to be any center to those flowers. It's like a spiky yellow puff bowl, which is quite different in texture. So there's a lot going on there. And I really also appreciate the curvature of the vase because the um, the shape of it.

[00:14:23] **Jacqui:** Shaded really beautifully with white layered oil on top of the yellow to give it the light effect as well. So they've really played with that curvature and shadowing really nicely.

[00:14:36] **Sarah:** Wow. Okay. So you've got a lot of description in there and the, the best description for, for someone who's from the blind and low vision community is definitely the flowers.

[00:14:45] **Sarah:** Yes. Um, because you really, what was so cool? Actually, you notice more than I did and I, and I kind of know the painting is that you described that some are closed, some haven't opened yet. Yes. And some have the flowers that have. Fallen off and that they are a little bit of a chaotic mess, which I like that.

[00:15:05] **Sarah:** I love that description. Chaos. We understand that either as an actual physical word or, or just as a visual. Yes. Chaos. It just means it's woo all directions. Yeah. So I really like that. I love how you describe the dark centers. Wow. And you did, you didn't even mention in the three of them in the top right hand corner, and I applaud you on that.

[00:15:25] **Sarah:** It was so good, but yeah, it doesn't, it's not perfectly displayed. Like it, there's a lot going on. It just, it's not all perfect. There's some that have open, some that are drooping. Some of the colors are more vibrant, some are darker. Yes. And the background, so I don't know what herring bone is. I actually don't know what that means, um, as a description.

[00:15:45] **Sarah:** But what we could say is, and now you said it, it could be the sky or a wall. Yes. But because we don't know, and this is without judgment. Yes. The background is. Yes. Right. So we could say that the background is blue, right? So, which makes the yellow of the flowers stand out even more. So we could say that.

[00:16:04] **Sarah:** So, I mean, you've got a really good description. I'm like, this is, this is so good.

[00:16:09] **Jacqui:** Um, it's my first time.

[00:16:10] **Sarah:** Yeah.

[00:16:12] **Sarah:** And then you mentioned the vase and I would ask you more about the shape. Yes. Because you said it was a, a nice shape. Yes. And so what, what is nice? Mm. Is it a bit of like a, is it sort of squat? Is it square?

[00:16:24] **Sarah:** Is it rounded? Is it, how would you describe it?

[00:16:27] **Jacqui:** Right, of course.

# Analyzing the Vase's Curvature and Colors

[00:16:28] **Jacqui:** Well, um, I did tap into the curvature, um, of the vase. Yes. So that's where my eye is drawn to the center. So the focal point appears to be in the center. It's still quite squat. It's not overly when elongated. Yeah, it is quite a wide and vast vase that can fit a lot of stems in, but at the top it is a bit more slender.

[00:16:53] **Jacqui:** So the bottom and the top are quite slender with the bolus center being the widest part of the vase, so there is a separation of colors. At the base of the vase there is white. And it follows the eye around in the curvature, and the second tier of the vase is yellow, and it has the white through it, which creates the shadowing and the texture and the illusion of curvature.

[00:17:21] **Jacqui:** You cannot see the lip that is underneath where the flowers would be. So the very top of the vase that's hidden by the foliage. They've covered, Vincent Van Gogh has covered that with shadowing, so there's a little bit of black stippling and speckling to resemble the shadowing. So it's, it's more obvious of why it's been covered up, not that it's been forgotten.

[00:17:45] **Jacqui:** It's actually been quite deliberate, so it really blends nicely, the yellow and the white, because the colors are still fairly simple.

# Interpreting the Sunflowers and Their Symbolism

[00:17:53] **Jacqui:** And I love that you said that we are kind of making the colors pop because you've got the yellow on the blue and Yeah, my interpretation of the sunflowers is representative of the sun in the sky.

[00:18:09] **Jacqui:** And that's kind of that evocative comparison that I would say that is there by having this yellow, beautiful sunlight creation. Just sitting in the sky in a bundle of greenery and dark speckles. It's interesting that the more I look at it, the more I'm seeing, I'm seeing gold. Yeah. And different colored hues as well.

[00:18:31] **Jacqui:** So it seems almost royal in some of its qualities on the, um, the petals of the flowers. So the bars itself is actually quite ordinary. I think that makes sense because it shouldn't be the focal point where our eyes are finding. Yeah. It should be a subtle part, a vessel that is necessary, but it's not the most important part of the story.

[00:18:53] **Sarah:** Yeah. So your descriptions are really good. I like what you said, it's quite simple. So that it doesn't take away from the look of the flowers.

[00:19:01] **Jacqui:** Mm-hmm.

[00:19:02] **Sarah:** So that statement there, part of it is with judgment, right. So we're, what we could say is that the ball is simplistic. Yes. With the curves. I really liked how you said it was wider at the top.

[00:19:12] **Sarah:** Uh, more narrow at the top and narrow at the bottom with the bulb is apart in the middle. Like brilliant. I can imagine that.

[00:19:18] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:19:18] **Sarah:** And then you said it was, uh, I think more white at the bottom.

[00:19:21] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:19:21] **Sarah:** Was it or, yeah. And that's a horizontal stripe.

[00:19:24] **Jacqui:** Yes. Right.

[00:19:25] **Sarah:** Going around.

[00:19:25] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:19:26] **Sarah:** So horizontal gives us direction.

[00:19:28] **Sarah:** Right. And then you talked about the next section up or the next tier. So beautiful. And you did allude and it's okay to allude to, 'cause we do know there's a lot of sunflowers in there. Mm-hmm. That it was wide enough to accommodate a lot of. Stems. Yes. Brilliant. That's great. So I know it's a big bundle.

[00:19:43] **Sarah:** That is awesome. I like your interpretation that it's against the sky because sunflowers do represent the sun, however that is with judgment. Yes.

# Describing the Background and Brush Strokes

[00:19:52] **Sarah:** So we couldn't say that, but we could say, like we said before, that the yellow against this, this vivid blue background or this, it's kind of, it's kind of vivid or vibrant a bit.

[00:20:03] **Sarah:** Or is it quite pale to blue in the background?

[00:20:06] **Jacqui:** I think the background is quite pale, but because of the texture of the strokes Yeah. That they've used the pallet knife, um, it does appear more vibrant because it's not flat, it's textured. Right. And it's layered. So when you are pressing a pallet knife into a heavy paint like oil and pressing it onto the linen or the canvas.

[00:20:28] **Jacqui:** Then you're going to leave an indentation, um, and a perimeter around. So the external perimeter is going to obviously be a different color tone. So you're seeing there being a multitude of colors when essentially, perhaps maybe there was only one blue. It looks like there's multiple layers, so it looks more vibrant due to the textured nature of it, not necessarily the tone of color.

[00:20:54] **Sarah:** And that's really good. So, so that we keep it not too overwhelming for the person who's listening, we would probably say that the way the brush strokes have been done, or the way the tool has been used in the blue painting mm-hmm. Gives it a texture quality. Mm-hmm. Giving it variations of a light blue color.

[00:21:14] **Sarah:** Right. So we could see something like that because, uh, if we get too much in technique, we'll lose a lot of people. Right. But your description is so good. I mean, you obviously know your art. I'm like. Wow. You are so good. So, but we we're just gonna simplify it. Yes. And just say that yes, it is, it is this paint.

[00:21:31] **Sarah:** But the texture gives it a difference of color and quality. Yes. And it really makes the yellow pop out and it's in a simplistic flaw, you know, it's the vase on a table or anything like that.

[00:21:43] **Jacqui:** Yeah.

# Simplifying Art Descriptions for Accessibility

[00:21:43] **Jacqui:** Yeah, I, I know what you mean because, um, I, I think it's being lost in that the technical aspects and when you do your audio descriptions, it has to accommodate all kinds of viewers and listeners and people with the lived experience, with the knowledge.

[00:21:59] **Jacqui:** And it's the same for any kind of communication. And in, in my writing, we were always told to write, um, journalistic writing and reporting for news from a fourth grade intellectual level because. That way it appeals to the whole market, and it's simplistic enough to understand complicated terms from a broad audience perspective.

[00:22:21] **Jacqui:** So you're not having to individually, uh, break it down with different styles of communication, which is just absolutely, it's not possible. If you have a niche that's great, you, you're writing for that audience, or it's a scientific journal, it makes perfect sense. But if it's an art gallery, um, meant to be accessible for everyone.

[00:22:40] **Jacqui:** Then you don't wanna close that door on people who don't have the technical knowledge as well. So that's a very good reminder for me. Thank you for that observation.

[00:22:49] **Sarah:** Oh, and it's so interesting, uh, one of the museums that I've been into that I've done some work for, has the didactic, which is academic speak.

[00:22:58] **Jacqui:** Mm.

[00:22:58] **Sarah:** That's what a didactic is. But then they've introduced a didactic for easy, easier read.

[00:23:04] **Jacqui:** Yeah, easy read.

[00:23:06] **Sarah:** Yeah. And then there's the QR code for audio descriptions. And we aim for about the grade nine level. So maybe, um, not, not as complex words, but just enough description. To not overwhelm as well. Yes.

# Discussing the Importance of Inclusive Communication

[00:23:18] **Sarah:** So with this one here, it's an interesting point because we go top to bottom, left to right, or you can do a clock, or sometimes there's one focal point.

[00:23:27] **Sarah:** Do you talk about it first?

[00:23:29] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:23:29] **Sarah:** And then talk about the background, or do you talk about the background and then really surprise everyone with the sun bars? So. Again, it really, you, you get a feel for it.

[00:23:39] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:23:39] **Sarah:** And I think be me personally, this would be a personal choice, but it would be a conversation I would have with my colleagues.

[00:23:46] **Jacqui:** Mm.

[00:23:46] **Sarah:** Is that there would be definitely talk about the sunflowers first and the pause.

[00:23:51] **Jacqui:** Mm.

[00:23:52] **Sarah:** And then talk about the blue in the background, but then remind people. That the blue is really making the yellow stand out. Yes. And here's another interesting word too, is background. A lot of the blind low vision community, we can understand background because it's, it's back there.

[00:24:08] **Sarah:** It's further back. Mm-hmm. But foreground, mm-hmm. We don't use that. Not in everyday conversation. Like you wouldn't go into a coffee shop and say, oh, I'd love to have the croissant in the foreground, please.

[00:24:18] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:24:18] **Sarah:** You know, it's like I'll have the croissant in the front, that first one. That sounds great. But you know, so, so you're very careful of that.

[00:24:26] **Sarah:** So in this beautiful, of this beautiful display of sunflowers at different times of their lives. Yes. So behind it is a blue background.

[00:24:35] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:24:35] **Sarah:** Behind is okay. In that case we can understand that.

[00:24:37] **Jacqui:** Mm-hmm.

[00:24:38] **Sarah:** But I wouldn't say. The sunflowers in the foreground of a blue background. Mm. So it, it just goes with what's sort of wordy, what sort of works.

[00:24:46] **Sarah:** And what the blind community and low vision community understand and the wording that we use.

[00:24:50] **Jacqui:** Yes. Which is great, is really feedback.

[00:24:52] **Sarah:** This is a really great example of this one. Yeah. So it's really kind of cool. So

[00:24:56] **Jacqui:** I thought that would've been really fascinating because I just thought, you know, it's, it's amazing.

[00:25:00] **Jacqui:** Like we both love art. We both know art, and if there's something that everybody knows, um, what a lot of people are familiar with that body of work, then they already have preconceived ideas and lived experience about what they feel like it looks like. Yes. So, yes. I thought it would be very interesting to hear from a different perspective how we view it differently as a learning tool and teaching for people to strengthen the way that they do audio description in their body of work anywhere where they put up digital images.

[00:25:32] **Sarah:** So there's a lot of people who do alt text, and I think alt text really just supports the, the picture really supports the paragraph or piece of information that it's aligned with. Yes. And therefore, the alt text only needs to reflect that. Yes. So gentleman working on his laptop at a desk. Great. Perfect.

[00:25:50] **Sarah:** Paul, I, I don't need the background. I don't need the books in the back. I don't need this, you know. Windows I, anything like, I just keep it simple. Yes. But when it comes to something like this, an audio description, just a hundred percent, just say co-design it with someone who is from the blind community.

[00:26:04] **Jacqui:** Right. That, that's so useful for me. Thank you.

[00:26:08] **Sarah:** Yeah. Yeah. No, but this was such a kind of cool process because you just, you kind of took off with it. I'm like. You're really good at this. I'm gonna take you with to every art gallery with me.

[00:26:18] **Jacqui:** Just, just put me in your pocket.

[00:26:21] **Sarah:** Oh yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

[00:26:23] **Jacqui:** I love it.

[00:26:25] **Jacqui:** Yeah, share the love.

# Details on the Vase and Sunflowers

[00:26:26] **Sarah:** And the only other thing I would ask is, because I know this one, how big, like, is it, it reached the top and the bottom, like how big are these flowers? Like it takes up most of the portrait, right?

[00:26:36] **Jacqui:** Yes, yes. And the only other thing that I was thinking was we didn't draw any attention to the bench.

[00:26:40] **Jacqui:** That's also yellow.

[00:26:42] **Sarah:** That it's on. Yeah,

[00:26:43] **Jacqui:** yeah, yeah. That as a contrast, and you've drawn the eye back and the curvature of the vase in the center of the vase is actually just higher than that, so it doesn't look like it blends into the bench. Whereas if the yellow was connected to the yellow, it wouldn't have anywhere near as much impact.

[00:27:01] **Jacqui:** It needed to have a certain amount of elevation in your color. So I find it interesting because in this image, I'm not sure if it's the version that I'm looking at at the moment or the original, but it looks like the ver the top, uh, sunflower that is the highest, actually the petals disappear off the canvas.

[00:27:20] **Jacqui:** I'm not sure whether that is the case in the original Mm, or whether it's complete on the original. They're all roughly about the same size, but when you are thinking about having, how many have we got? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, I think by the looks of it. And some of them are about half the size, but they're all pretty much.

[00:27:44] **Jacqui:** I guess if you've got four, it would cover like just the flower center with the petals, um, not including the stem or anything else. You'd probably have four across in a horizontal fashion that would, um, cover the entirety of the left to right of the canvas. So that's how large the actual face of the flower is.

[00:28:06] **Jacqui:** Yeah. Which is typical from what you would expect from a sunflower, maybe even a bit small.

[00:28:12] **Sarah:** And, and those are really great details. I think what we, we look for is maybe just basics that the bunch of the flowers, the bouquet of the flowers at the top almost, and the vase almost fill up the entire portrait from the top to the bottom.

[00:28:27] **Sarah:** Yes. Right And left to right. Hearing that there's four across, I mean, that's a great description. That might be just too much information that takes away Okay. Because we're, we're thinking about it at the same time. We're hearing it. And for us to hear that it's a bouquet of flowers. Perfect. Yes. That's what we need to know, top to bottom.

[00:28:42] **Sarah:** But I mean, you've got some extra detail in there and it's, at this point, it's good to have more than than less and then edit it back. Yes. And then I often, uh, we try to put in. The measurements would've come in beforehand, but is it framed or not framed? And is there a signature on it?

[00:28:59] **Jacqui:** Mm, that's interesting.

# The Significance of Frames and Signatures

[00:29:00] **Jacqui:** Yes, because you wouldn't, I, I'm not sure about the original, but the one I'm looking at is not framed. So it's, uh, left to right. The, the paint is covered, the entirety of the canvas, and it's stretched across, so you can't see any angles or anything else interfering with the blue. It just drops off the canvas, so, yeah.

[00:29:19] **Jacqui:** No frame is actually quite attractive in this piece because it doesn't draw your eye to anything else that shouldn't be there. And what I think is beautiful is there's just a simple Vincent in shaky writing that is diagonally, draped down the lower part of the vase. So. It's like he's just put his first name just so simply placed there across the white, and it is in a darker font, but it's still quite subtle, like a watermark, but it's, it's there and it's noticeable and you know that it's a Van Gogh.

[00:29:55] **Jacqui:** You don't need his surname. It's just simple. Vincent as a sign off, and it's beautiful and elegant and speaks to the beauty and detail of the piece.

[00:30:05] **Sarah:** So what I'll ask you there is, is it running vertically or is it running horizontally?

[00:30:11] **Jacqui:** Oh, um, I think I said diagonally.

[00:30:15] **Sarah:** Oh, so diagonally, so starting from like the bottom left, going up to the right,

[00:30:20] **Jacqui:** uh, starting from the top left, going down to the bottom right.

[00:30:24] **Sarah:** Of the vase. So there you go. That gives me a direction and an understanding.

[00:30:27] **Jacqui:** It doesn't cover the entirety of the vase. It's um, it's diagonally in the lower part of the white section.

[00:30:35] **Sarah:** Perfect.

[00:30:35] **Jacqui:** And it covers close to half of the white section diagonally. So it's not huge. It's still quite small and subtle.

[00:30:43] **Jacqui:** Yeah.

[00:30:44] **Sarah:** And that's perfect because you know, it's, it's one thing to say, oh, he signed it, but how and where and mm-hmm. And one thing we had with an artist, William Robinson, he often signed his name in accordance to. Have it blend in with the landscapes he was doing. So there was one that we did, and I can't think of the words, but he signed his name and dated it in an orange paint.

[00:31:06] **Sarah:** Yes. That went with the wild grass and the wild flowers and it just sort of blended in in the bottom left hand corner.

[00:31:13] **Jacqui:** Oh, lovely.

[00:31:13] **Sarah:** And I think these are those little bits of details that just finish it off nicely. Yeah. Um, and what was interesting too, I find a frame can make make up one as well. You said this was unframed because, well, it speaks for itself and I think that's a great, uh, that's very interesting.

[00:31:28] **Sarah:** I always find it quite interesting. We had one where it might be just a pale, a pale brown wooden frame. Yes. Well, might have one that's a thick, black, glossy

[00:31:38] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:31:38] **Sarah:** Frame that goes around it with a large white mat. Mm. That just gives you an idea of how dramatic it can be. So I love hearing descriptions, but I, there was also an aboriginal or indigenous artist, Julie Watson, and she never frames her work.

[00:31:52] **Sarah:** And she says, because she just wants her work to go on.

[00:31:57] **Jacqui:** Oh, yes.

[00:31:57] **Sarah:** She doesn't wanna put any boundaries on it or anything. She just, it keeps going. Yeah. And I'm like, oh my goodness. I love that.

[00:32:03] **Jacqui:** That's what I was thinking. Like it, it's just an endless. Sea of, of blue, and that's where it's representative of the sky.

[00:32:10] **Jacqui:** And that's why it drew your attention to the fact that it just, it, there's no drop off point. It just continues. And there's nothing to detract from that. It's just the art is, is enough on its own. It doesn't need to be encompassed or embraced in anything. Yeah.

[00:32:24] **Sarah:** That's right. And, and I think that's why describing a frame if there is one, or mentioning that there isn't one is a good idea.

[00:32:30] **Sarah:** And again, it, it, it is a visual and perhaps somebody, uh, who might be totally blind, never seen this before. It may not be a big impact, but it just, yeah. I think it gives the idea like either it's framed or encompassed or there's a boundary.

[00:32:44] **Jacqui:** Mm-hmm.

[00:32:44] **Sarah:** I, I, it does change the idea of it. Yes. And I think that's important to put in there.

[00:32:49] **Sarah:** If it's frame by frame.

[00:32:51] **Jacqui:** Yes. No, that's, that's an excellent observation and thank you for drawing my attention to that because yeah, you so often

[00:32:58] **Sarah:** I always ask that when I work with a colleague, yes, as one of the person is it signed,

[00:33:03] **Jacqui:** it's, these things could be overlooked and you might minimize the importance of them.

# Reflections on Art Description and Inclusivity

[00:33:07] **Jacqui:** So I think that's really great in understanding the storytelling and really understanding technology in storytelling in the art description that you are doing because. All of these things, including them, just make a big difference in making everything that we're doing more accessible to, uh, the community as a whole.

[00:33:28] **Jacqui:** And I think that's always worth celebrating. That's really exciting. Yeah.

[00:33:32] **Sarah:** And like you said too, when you were describing this to, to myself, like you describe it to me and, and the people listening to this podcast, you, you said you were noticing things that you hadn't noticed before because you were really looking at it

[00:33:45] **Jacqui:** Yes.

[00:33:45] **Sarah:** And picking up things. And I think that's what we wanna get with these audio descriptions. So it works for everybody. You're gonna get something out of it. I I just love that. Yeah. I really love that. So you did a great job. High five.

[00:33:57] **Jacqui:** Oh, thank you. High five to you two. Go us. Yeah. Well I really appreciate your thoughts on that and, and it was a bit of a sneaky one.

[00:34:08] **Jacqui:** I hadn't actually even thought of it, but, um, innovative ideas often happen on the spot. And thank you for making room for that one. 'cause I thought that was really cool.

[00:34:19] **Sarah:** It was a good one. It was so good. It was kind of a fun experience and you can see it how it happens and, and get an idea of what we go through when we look at these things.

[00:34:28] **Jacqui:** Yeah.

[00:34:28] **Sarah:** And how it starts. Well, that's what I, what questions need to be asked.

[00:34:31] **Jacqui:** Yeah. It gives people an insight into a day in the life of what you'd be doing in the gallery. So I thought that would be a cool visual way for us to experience that together. So thank you.

[00:34:42] **Sarah:** A great surprise.

[00:34:43] **Jacqui:** Yeah, it was a great surprise for me.

[00:34:46] **Jacqui:** I think. I, I just, I surprised myself.

[00:34:50] **Sarah:** So good.

[00:34:52] **Jacqui:** So good.

[00:34:53] **Sarah:** We had an idea what the conversation was gonna be, but. You let it go live and just have a conversational time with somebody, different questions come out and some of that you can't plan for. And I think this is wonderful.

# Concluding Thoughts and Appreciation

[00:35:06] **Sarah:** These are really good questions and I feel like I've been able to tell a bit more of what I do and you've been very interested in what I do and I hope that comes across to the listeners and they get excited about.

[00:35:17] **Sarah:** Art as well. And it is inclusive. It's becoming more inclusive for everyone. So go looking for it. It's there.

[00:35:25] **Jacqui:** It absolutely is. I, I loved it too and uh, it was a really special rapport. I love chatting with you and thank you for your time.

[00:35:32] **Sarah:** Oh, thank you Jacqui.

[00:35:33] **Sarah:** It was great.

[00:35:35] **Jacqui:** All my love, Jacqui.

[00:35:40] **Jacqui:** This was an original community Matters media production. Thank you for connecting with us. Please continue to follow us as part of our connected, authentic community where you show up just as you are.