Mission & History

Since its inception in June 1984, Art Access has been committed to providing equal opportunities to inclusive arts programming for Utahns with disabilities and those with limited access to the arts. We are a community-focused organization that strives to demonstrate that the arts are a universal vehicle for drawing out our similarities, celebrating our differences, and ultimately connecting us to each other. Through our philosophy of inclusion, we serve a diverse population of adults and children with and without disabilities, other disadvantaged groups, and the general public. We are an affiliate of VSA, which is a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts through its Office of VSA & Accessibility, and many of our programs have benefitted from partnerships with local educational, artistic, and public service organizations. In June 2014, we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary.

Art Access began as a small volunteer operation that was housed in its founder’s home and provided festivals for people with disabilities. In the ensuing years, Art Access has become a well-respected nonprofit that employs multiple staff members; offers a broad range of arts programming; contracts with numerous teaching artists; partners with many local disability, arts, and educational organizations; receives federal, state, and local funding; and anchors the arts on Salt Lake City’s west side. During the past fiscal year, Art Access served over 20,450 Utahns of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Brief Program Descriptions

Art Access Gallery is an access point through which artists with disabilities can join the mainstream arts community by exhibiting their artwork together with artists without disabilities. It is also an important way for patrons to further develop an understanding of people with disabilities and disability issues in Utah.

Visual Arts Workshops
The Kindred Spirits, Teen, Adult, and Veterans workshops – are taught by professional artists and enable participants of all ages and abilities to create art in an inclusive and accessible environment.

The Partners professional artist mentoring program matches emerging artists with disabilities or those with limited access to the arts one-on-one with professional artist mentors.

Artist Residencies bring arts professionals to facilities such as rehabilitation centers, care centers, senior centers, and other service venues.

Integrated Arts in Utah Schools provides arts education services to students, ages 3 to 22, who receive special education services in Utah schools and in other disability service venues.
The **Literary Arts** program provides creative writing workshops in facilities where adults and teens with disabilities live or gather, runs a community writing group, produces an annual literary magazine, and conducts a disability and literature book group.

**Theatre Arts** seeks to educate the public to respect differences through plays produced by our partner, PYGmalion Productions.

The **Permanent Collection** includes artworks by Utah artists with disabilities that we loan to community organizations.

**Everyone Welcome** is a training program for docents and staff at Utah cultural facilities that focuses on accessibility and inclusion.

For a more complete description of each of the above programs, please visit the programs tab on our website at [www.accessart.org](http://www.accessart.org) and select the program from the dropdown menu.