# NFBMUS Guest Experience Narrative

**Working draft**

4/28/2023

## A Note On Intention

This document is intended to convey the current (draft) experience for guests visiting the new museum. It is organized around beats, or key stories and experiences, currently identified, as well as emerging themes by which the space will be organized. The language used is intended to convey tone and is not representative of the final text for media use or exhibition installation.

## Museum Goals

As defined by the National Federation of the Blind:

The museum will provide the guest with the opportunity to explore the advancements, struggles, and successes of blind people as individuals and as a movement. It will facilitate understanding of the past; stimulate awareness of the present; and encourage respect, determination, action, and equity for the future.

Fellow museums and other cultural organizations will look to the Museum of the Blind People’s Movement for best practices around inclusive design and accessibility. The Museum will serve as a model for how to welcome the widest possible audience.

## Draft Experience Goals

1. **Dispel** myths and demystify assumptions and cliches surrounding blindness
2. **Empower** action, advocacy, and self-awareness in a safe and supportive environment
3. **Model** radical accessibility throughout the entire experience, a live state of testing, adjusting, and co-creating with a full spectrum of guests
4. **Normalize** universal human emotions like fear, joy, awkwardness, and curiosity

## The Draft Guest Experience Narrative

Exiting the elevator, a voice welcomes you to The Museum of the Blind People's Movement.

Upon entering the space, guests find themselves in a space that provides an audio introduction to the awaiting experience. Tactile affordances, such as textural changes on the floor and accessible signage, are used in a clear, consistent, hierarchical manner throughout the exhibits so that guests can easily navigate the space.

Each gallery will have a distinct entry/exit and explore one facet of the blind experience.

Each gallery will include, at minimum, tactile interactions, audio soundscapes, multimodal opportunities for engagement and content consumption, and content provided in Braille, English, Spanish, and every media screen will surface captioning, audio description, and ASL.

Additional content that is Braille-only may be provided to afford greater engagement or content delivery.

### Introductory Experience Concept

Introductory Goal: Meeting each guest where they are, acknowledging the full spectrum of assumptions and the journeys guests are on in their understanding of blindness.

As noted above, the below concept does not represent a final script or language. It is intended to establish a relationship with the guests and set the tone and intention of the introductory experience.

Guests enter the theatre space. At the start, the lights are low, dimming to total darkness as the experience unfolds.

Voices, young and old, articulate what guests of all types may be thinking and feeling upon arrival. The voices illustrate an intersection of perspectives and lived experiences that express joy, confidence, humor, and promise - while giving permission for all guests to acknowledge doubt, fear, and preconceptions they may hold.

As the voices continue, a soundscape of birds, cars, breeze in the trees, ambient street sounds, and daily clatter builds and then stops.

The narrator’s voice fades in and shares a welcome to the museum as a space for exploration, connection, and empowering every guest to understand and engage with blind culture in a new way.

After the introduction, guests move into the larger galleries where the following themes and stories will be encountered.

### Theme: Born and Becoming

Outcome: **Blow up low expectations of blindness**

Experience Concept: Discover the many ways that blindness expresses itself across communities, language, and expectations (broken and met). Guests will see that there is no one way to “be blind” by encountering personal stories through media and listening stations. Questions that express worry, awkwardness, and experiences with low expectations that blind people encounter across their lives are modeled throughout. “How do you get around?” “How can you be a parent?” “What jobs can you “really” do?” etc.

### Theme: The Blind People’s Movement

**Outcome: Build respect for human agency**

Experience Concept: Discover that blindness can impact anyone at any point in their life, and for many, this is the start of their own journey as part of the Blind Peoples’ Movement. Guests will encounter stories of blind people who work for change and confront myths of “well-known” blind icons. Stories of political action, the fight for civil rights, allyship, and advocacy will bring to life the concept of “walking alone, marching together.” Guests will have opportunities to sign up or scan for newsletters and web pages and connect to relevant resources - for both blind and sighted allies.

### Theme Option 1: Expectations of blindness Theme Option 2:What did you expect?

**Outcome: Disturb the public perception of blindness**

Experience Concept: Discover how blindness has been portrayed by pop culture in contrast to lived experiences within the blind community. Guests will be able to “pull up a bar stool” and listen to blind people causally share anecdotes of encountering expectations of sighted on-lookers, faux pas, and good intentions gone astray. Guests will also have the opportunity to ask their own “awkward” questions or contribute their lived experiences in an anonymous way and play a pop culture myth-busting game.

### Theme: Taking up space

**Outcome: Inspire coming back for connection**

Experience Concept: Discover personal and creative expressions of what it means for blind people from all walks of life to “take up space.” Guests will experience a space for reflection and connection in the midst of feeling inspired, challenged, frustrated, or overwhelmed. A space for guests to share their own experiences of learning and unlearning will foster connection and deeper meaning for all users.

### Theme: Discovering potential

**Outcome: Celebrate the role of blind culture and innovation in daily life**

Experience Concept: Discover the many ways that blind culture and innovation have impacted daily life for blind and sighted people around the world. Guests will get hands-on with devices created by the blind for the blind, as well as those created by sighted inventors. Examples of technologies such as text recognition, keyboards, GPS systems, and even the iconic white cane will further expand on questions unfolding throughout the experience, such as “Is it safe?” “How can you do that?” and “How do you know?”

### Additional Guest Experiences and Amenities

The Museum will feature the following experiences and amenities to be defined and developed in the future:

1. Cafe
2. Retail space
3. Gender-neutral, accessible restrooms
4. Family restroom and nursing space
5. “Sensory pause” spaces
6. Service animal relief area(s)