

Transcript: CVI and ART, (CVIART) – sensing things differently – Dr John Ravenscroft

1

00:00:17,833 --> 00:00:19,616

My name is Professor John Ravenscroft,

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00:00:19,616 --> 00:00:21,383

and I'm chair of childhood visual impairment

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00:00:21,383 --> 00:00:22,933

at the University of Edinburgh.

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00:00:22,933 --> 00:00:24,100

I'm in my 50s.

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00:00:24,100 --> 00:00:25,300

I'm a white male.

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00:00:25,300 --> 00:00:29,516

I have very thin hair and I
compensate by having a small goatee beard

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00:00:29,516 --> 00:00:31,366

and I'm of average height.

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00:00:31,816 --> 00:00:37,333

I am an actual academic who has particular
research interests in Childhood Visual Impairment,

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00:00:37,333 --> 00:00:43,450

and my particular interest around that is

something that is called Cerebral Visual Impairment.

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00:00:44,666 --> 00:00:48,983

(soft pulsing music)

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00:00:48,983 --> 00:00:53,933

The eyes take in information
and that information gets sent to the brain,

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00:00:54,716 --> 00:00:58,383

and then it goes through
processing parts within the brain.

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00:00:58,383 --> 00:01:03,049

Now if you've got damage to those
processing parts of vision in your brain,

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00:01:03,049 --> 00:01:06,866

you're going to have an
impairment of what you see.

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00:01:06,866 --> 00:01:10,583

(gentle piano music)

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00:01:10,583 --> 00:01:15,450

While I was listening to a
NASA astronaut on Radio Four,

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00:01:15,450 --> 00:01:20,200

he was describing space travel
and how the public understanding

18

00:01:20,200 --> 00:01:23,799

suddenly changed with David Bowie's Space Oddity.

19

00:01:25,083 --> 00:01:28,250

(music builds in intensity)

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00:01:28,250 --> 00:01:33,083

I have given many,
many hundreds of lectures on CVI.

21

00:01:33,583 --> 00:01:34,599

Around the world.

22

00:01:34,599 --> 00:01:38,483

Am I being able to get really the complexities

23

00:01:38,483 --> 00:01:41,533

of what a child with
Cerebral Visual Impairment presents?

24

00:01:41,766 --> 00:01:44,549

What if I could do something similar

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00:01:44,549 --> 00:01:47,349

and create a change in the public understanding

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00:01:47,349 --> 00:01:49,633

of Cerebral Vision Impairment through art?

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00:01:50,216 --> 00:01:52,049

Hi, my name is Dr. Stephen Hollingsworth.

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00:01:52,049 --> 00:01:54,633

I'm an artist and academic.

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00:01:55,049 --> 00:01:56,250

I'm in my early to mid 50s

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00:01:56,500 --> 00:01:57,750

and I'm a white male.

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00:01:58,583 --> 00:02:01,483

As a visual artist,

I've always been interested in the senses.

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00:02:02,133 --> 00:02:04,650

When we see an object,

we're imposing a label on that object,

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00:02:04,650 --> 00:02:07,299

and we automatically

understand a concept of that object.

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00:02:07,299 --> 00:02:10,183

We look at a glass

we know it's fragile, it's transparent.

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00:02:10,183 --> 00:02:13,349

People who have not had access

to that don't have the same concept as us.

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00:02:13,349 --> 00:02:16,650

Yet, we might be imposing that

normal that we know onto them.

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00:02:17,116 --> 00:02:21,849

(slow pulsing music)

38

00:02:21,849 --> 00:02:25,699

Again, that's what CVI really
taught me that everything is individual.

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00:02:25,699 --> 00:02:29,316

We're seeing through our own
heads and our own knowledge, our own history.

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00:02:30,783 --> 00:02:33,366

I was doing online workshops
with people with profound disability

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00:02:33,366 --> 00:02:38,300

and I was trying to generate through my tiny
camera on my laptop the visual experience of them

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00:02:38,300 --> 00:02:41,099

and I was putting LED strips directly on the camera,

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00:02:41,099 --> 00:02:45,216

and I noticed it was really
fascinating a triangle came out.

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00:02:45,216 --> 00:02:49,383

(slow pulsing music fades out)

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00:02:49,383 --> 00:02:52,766

Every child with Cerebral
Visual Impairment is different,

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00:02:52,766 --> 00:02:56,849

and we need to spend time assessing supporting ...

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00:02:57,583 --> 00:03:02,916

... doing a whole range of support and
assessment with children with Cerebral Visual Impairment

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00:03:02,916 --> 00:03:08,699

to understand how their own
unique individual Cerebral Visual Impairment

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00:03:08,699 --> 00:03:11,366

is presenting in the form of their behaviour.

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00:03:11,366 --> 00:03:15,250

(distant birdsong)

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00:03:15,250 --> 00:03:17,150

Hello, my name is David Wallace.

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00:03:17,533 --> 00:03:20,866

I'm an Irish composer from the southeast of Ireland.

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00:03:20,866 --> 00:03:23,750

I'm a white male with brown hair and blue eyes.

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00:03:23,750 --> 00:03:25,400

In my late thirties.

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00:03:26,366 --> 00:03:30,433

I was initially struggling how to get into the project.

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00:03:30,433 --> 00:03:34,683

You know, how am I going to understand or empathise here?

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00:03:34,683 --> 00:03:42,300

(sound of children's voices, static and distant music)

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00:03:42,300 --> 00:03:46,816

There was one interview with a girl who has CVI, who's a musician.

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00:03:47,933 --> 00:03:52,516

A lot of learning music is reading, is learning from the page.

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00:03:53,150 --> 00:03:57,683

And it was really interesting how she learnt was basically by ear.

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00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:03,883

What if my brain couldn't process sound in the same way as it does now?

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00:04:03,883 --> 00:04:07,583

How would that feel and how would that present itself?

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00:04:07,583 --> 00:04:10,016

(sound of children's voices and metal rattling)

64

00:04:10,016 --> 00:04:14,883

One of the young artists who is involved in this project as well, who has CVI,

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00:04:15,716 --> 00:04:23,916
he heard my piece and said how
amazingly similar it was to his collage

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00:04:23,916 --> 00:04:25,833
that he had done for the project

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00:04:26,333 --> 00:04:28,316
and they've actually put them together.

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00:04:28,316 --> 00:04:34,566
(sound of intense static and distant violin)

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00:04:35,766 --> 00:04:38,699
With the CVI,
it might be that you can't process objects,

70
00:04:38,699 --> 00:04:42,433
you can't see your face,
it might be a lower visual field missing.

71
00:04:42,433 --> 00:04:45,399
There might be something on the left missing.

72
00:04:46,033 --> 00:04:47,416
And also we see with our bodies as well.

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00:04:47,416 --> 00:04:51,133
Our eyes are here,
but vision is embodied.

74
00:04:52,050 --> 00:04:54,883
(sound of distant traffic)

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00:04:54,883 --> 00:04:57,633

If you're walking on the tube
or if you're going to get a bus,

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00:04:57,633 --> 00:05:02,566

you're able to move your body through that
3D space without actually ever hitting anything

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00:05:02,566 --> 00:05:04,250

or bumping into anything.

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00:05:04,250 --> 00:05:07,316

But imagine if that part of that processing bit

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00:05:07,316 --> 00:05:11,483

that coordinates what you see and
how you move your body is damaged.

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00:05:11,483 --> 00:05:14,533

(noise of traffic builds)

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00:05:14,533 --> 00:05:16,383

My name is Dr. Wendy Timmons.

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00:05:16,383 --> 00:05:19,516

I am a dance practitioner and academic

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00:05:19,516 --> 00:05:21,800

I work at the University of Edinburgh.

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00:05:21,800 --> 00:05:25,833

I'm a mature lady in my 60s with platinum hair.

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00:05:27,833 --> 00:05:32,583

I started in the world of dance as a dance artist,

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00:05:32,583 --> 00:05:36,566

I then moved on to dance
practise teaching classical ballet.

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00:05:37,166 --> 00:05:39,866

Latterly, I came to the University of Edinburgh,

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00:05:39,866 --> 00:05:44,550

where I developed the Dance
Science and Education Master's programme,

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00:05:44,550 --> 00:05:47,383

which I now currently direct.

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00:05:47,383 --> 00:05:51,566

(slow pulsing music)

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00:05:51,566 --> 00:05:53,699

Dancers don't always look with their eyes.

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00:05:53,699 --> 00:05:55,816

They look through their senses.

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00:05:56,383 --> 00:05:59,233

When a dancer's on stage, they can't see

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00:05:59,233 --> 00:06:01,899

because they've got lights in their faces.

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00:06:01,899 --> 00:06:05,449

So we do have a heightened
sense of where we are in space

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00:06:05,449 --> 00:06:08,699

and able to negotiate around people and things.

97

00:06:09,100 --> 00:06:12,899

(sound of dancers feet and gentle music)

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00:06:12,899 --> 00:06:20,566

So having listened to and talked about
a lot what living with CVI might feel like,

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00:06:20,566 --> 00:06:22,800

the dancers worked on their own

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00:06:22,800 --> 00:06:29,633

interpreting what they
thought it would feel like to experience CVI.

101

00:06:29,633 --> 00:06:32,699

(gentle string music builds)

102

00:06:32,699 --> 00:06:37,899

Lots of solo improvisation into trying to understand,

103

00:06:37,899 --> 00:06:41,566

not knowing where your
body necessarily is in space.

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00:06:41,566 --> 00:06:48,933

(string music and sound of dancer's movement)

105

00:06:49,666 --> 00:06:52,933

At one point in the film, there is a tent

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00:06:52,933 --> 00:06:55,600

and the idea of that came from

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00:06:55,600 --> 00:06:59,666

some of the conversations and
discussions, we'd had with Gordon

108

00:06:59,666 --> 00:07:06,000

about how children and their
parents use a tent as a safe space to go into

109

00:07:06,616 --> 00:07:09,316

when things had started to get a little bit too much.

110

00:07:09,316 --> 00:07:15,333

(string music swells)

111

00:07:15,600 --> 00:07:18,366

Somebody experiencing CVI,

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00:07:18,366 --> 00:07:21,500

if they go to an open
space where there's a landscape,

113

00:07:22,600 --> 00:07:24,350

the picture becomes very clear.

114

00:07:24,350 --> 00:07:28,250

(the sound of the waves mix into the music)

115

00:07:28,583 --> 00:07:32,166

So we wanted the final scene to be on a beach.

116

00:07:32,166 --> 00:07:34,816

(the sound of waves)

117

00:07:34,816 --> 00:07:37,600

It's not a representation of what CVI is.

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00:07:37,600 --> 00:07:41,183

It's an interpretation potentially of

119

00:07:41,183 --> 00:07:43,483

the experience of CVI

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00:07:43,483 --> 00:07:45,833

from a movement perspective.

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00:07:45,833 --> 00:07:49,133

John, you had these
visions of what the music piece,

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00:07:49,133 --> 00:07:51,199

the visual art piece,
the dance piece would look like,

123

00:07:51,199 --> 00:07:53,800

but actually, it was nothing like that.

124

00:07:53,800 --> 00:07:57,016

And I thought wow,
that's a fabulous experience for me.

125

00:07:57,016 --> 00:08:00,633

(gentle string music)

126

00:08:01,016 --> 00:08:04,516

So I've learnt that the creative mind of artists

127

00:08:04,516 --> 00:08:06,800

will lead you into directions

128

00:08:06,800 --> 00:08:09,300

that you will have never have thought of before.

129

00:08:09,783 --> 00:08:14,550

(sound of a gentle breeze)

130

00:08:15,216 --> 00:08:17,949

It seems to have started a conversation

131

00:08:17,949 --> 00:08:20,699

and raised the awareness past, you know,

132

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:24,166

past the academia kind of level,

133

00:08:24,483 --> 00:08:28,016

into the mainstream, which is ... you know,

134

00:08:28,016 --> 00:08:30,850

where these conversations can really gain traction.

135

00:08:31,616 --> 00:08:36,133

(gentle string music)

136

00:08:36,316 --> 00:08:39,233

So I'm combining

those artists that I've commissioned,

137

00:08:39,233 --> 00:08:44,433

and I'm combining the works of artists

that have Cerebral Visual Impairment themselves.

138

00:08:44,933 --> 00:08:51,866

(gentle string music builds)

139

00:08:52,649 --> 00:08:55,250

This was almost like a proof of concept.

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00:08:55,250 --> 00:08:58,600

Can we use art to explain

what Cerebral Visual Impairment is?

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00:08:58,600 --> 00:09:00,366

The answer to that is yes, we can.

142

00:09:00,750 --> 00:09:03,533

(gentle string music fades)

143

00:09:03,533 --> 00:09:09,399

So part of that legacy is going around schools

that have children with Cerebral Visual impairment

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00:09:09,399 --> 00:09:13,600

and using the outcomes of the project to help children themselves,

145

00:09:13,600 --> 00:09:17,483

to help the teachers to understand what Cerebral Visual Impairment is.

146

00:09:17,483 --> 00:09:19,433

And that's what Stephen's doing now.

147

00:09:20,200 --> 00:09:23,833

(gentle pulsing music)

148

00:09:23,833 --> 00:09:27,133

I want to really unlock children's perceptions.

149

00:09:27,133 --> 00:09:30,766

If you unlock what their perception might be you're unlocking potential

150

00:09:30,766 --> 00:09:32,383

and create a bridge

151

00:09:34,299 --> 00:09:37,366

into knowledge which allows

152

00:09:37,983 --> 00:09:40,933

somebody to think about something differently and to do something a different way,

153

00:09:40,933 --> 00:09:43,416

which actually increases agency

154

00:09:43,416 --> 00:09:47,950

and helps somebody navigate
the world better and able to learn better.