

Catalogue

of tactile educational services

MUSEO OMERO



Francesco Morandini, Tobias and the Angel (translation into plastic high relief).

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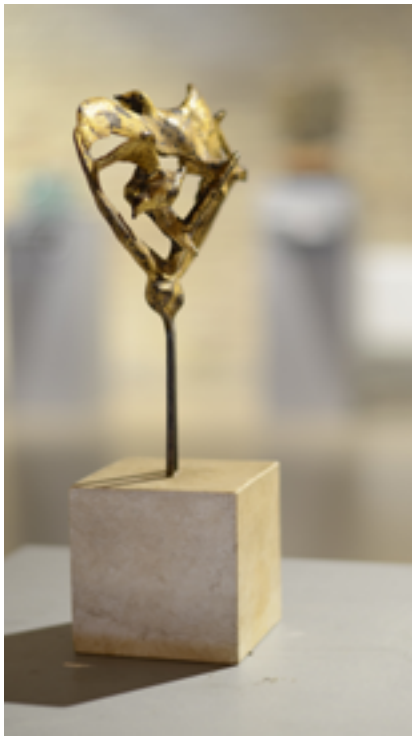
View of the Renaissance room.

Omero State Tactile Museum

The Omero State Tactile Museum was founded in **1993** from a “revolutionary” idea by Professor **Aldo Grassini** and his wife **Daniela Bottegoni**, both blind: to experience works of art through touch – a right for blind people and an opportunity to gain knowledge for everyone.

Since 2012 the Museum has been housed in the **18th-century Mole Vanvitelliana** in Ancona. It offers a multisensory itinerary that includes copies of classical masterpieces, from the Venus de Milo to Michelangelo’s Pietà; architectural models, from the Parthenon in Athens to St Peter’s Basilica; original works of contemporary sculpture; and design objects selected from the winning and mentioned projects of the **Compasso d’Oro**.









Michelangelo Buonarroti, Head of David (copy).



Michelangelo Buonarroti, St Peter’s Pietà (copy, detail).

Training, projects and consultancy

The Omero Museum is a **centre for study and research** on the **perception and appreciation of works of art**. For years it has been exporting the **culture of accessibility** through training courses and conferences, publications and consultancy, services for other institutions and museums, agreements, workshops, collaborations and internationally significant tactile exhibitions.

It **produces tactile educational aids**, that is, aids that help blind and partially sighted people understand art. The effectiveness of its products stems from the experience and professionalism of the staff who have worked there for years.

Among the national projects in which the Museum plays a leading role are **Marche for all**, **InclusivOpera** and the exhibition “Toccar con mano i Longobardi” (“Touching the Lombards”).

For the Marche Region, the Museum was also the **scientific partner** of the project “Il museo di tutti e per tutti” (“The museum of everyone and for everyone”), which made more than 30 museums in the Marche more accessible. It has provided consultancy for the creation of accessible stations, such as the Tomb of Pope Julius II in San Pietro in Vincoli (Rome) and the Etruscan house-tomb at the Cerveteri Archaeological Park.

The Museum takes part in **European projects** and has provided **training** and **consultancy** for **museum displays** both in Lebanon, with the project “Please don’t touch”, and in Egypt, for the archaeological museums of Cairo and Alexandria.

The Museum’s staff organise **training courses** both in-house, such as the annual **Course on Accessibility** to Cultural Heritage, and externally, for example at the Colosseum Archaeological Park or at the SantaGiulia Academy in Brescia.

Tactile drawings

A **raised-line drawing** is a drawing translated into relief for tactile purposes, after a process of simplifying the image. The drawing is made on a special sheet containing countless microcapsules of plastic material. When the sheet is exposed to the heat of a special oven, known as a “Minolta”, the black **parts** of the **drawing swell**, creating the **relief**. It is a technique suited to depicting simple images such as frontal views of paintings, illustrations, maps and architectural details. Its effectiveness also depends on the use of different textures to distinguish the various parts of the image. Tactile reading of a raised-line drawing should always be accompanied by a verbal description.



Top left, self-portrait photograph by Robert Mapplethorpe; bottom left, photograph of Patti Smith; on the right, the raised-line translations.



Guercino, The Aversa Assumption (translation into relief as a tactile drawing).

High-relief translations

A high-relief translation is a volumetric **reinterpretation of a two-dimensional image** (photograph, painting, etc.), designed to allow the tactile understanding of figures, volumes and details.

A high-relief translation is the result of several stages: it begins with a study of the image in view of its translation, then moves on to hand modelling in plasticine, from which a silicone rubber mould is taken; the final high relief is made from the mould and can be in various materials: resin, alabaster plaster, terracotta. It is a technique that allows **good tactile understanding of the subject** and of the scenic arrangement represented in a two-dimensional image.



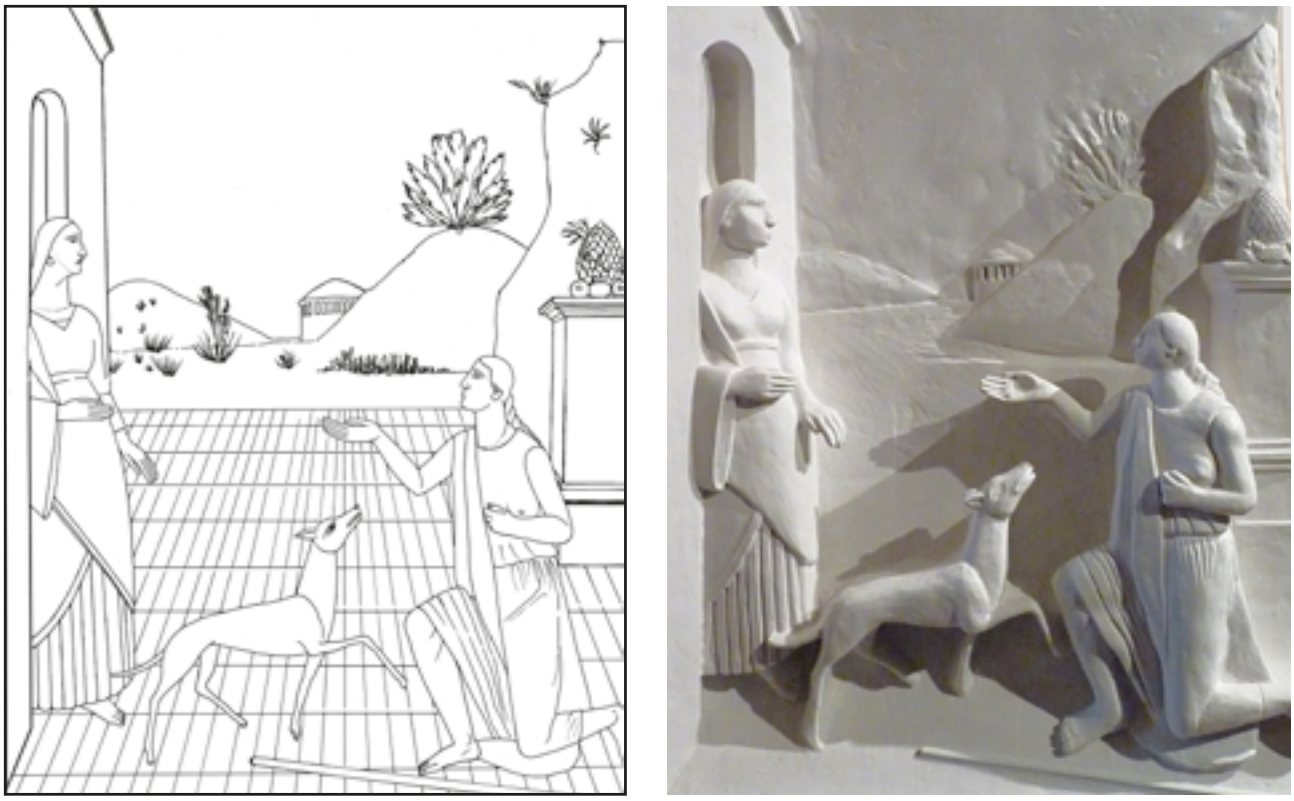
Caravaggio, Boy Bitten by a Lizard (modelling phase).







Alfredo Catarsini, Marina. Above: the original work and the work during a modelling phase in resin. Below: the work in its final state (sculpted high relief).



Carlo Carrà, Lot's Daughters – Mart, Rovereto (TN) (stages of the translation into high relief).





Alfredo Catarsini, apse semi-dome of the Church of San Martino (LU) (photograph of the fresco and high-relief translation).



Braille text

Braille is a raised **writing and reading system for blind and partially sighted people**, invented by the Frenchman Louis Braille in 1829.
The characters are formed by combinations of one to a maximum of six dots, within a rectangle of 4x7 mm.

The Museum produces graphic layouts with Braille transcriptions. It prints Braille **on paper** (booklets, books, leaflets), using a dedicated embosser, and **on transparent adhesive acetate sheets** (captions, panels), using a typewriter known as a “dattilobraille” (**Braille typewriter**).

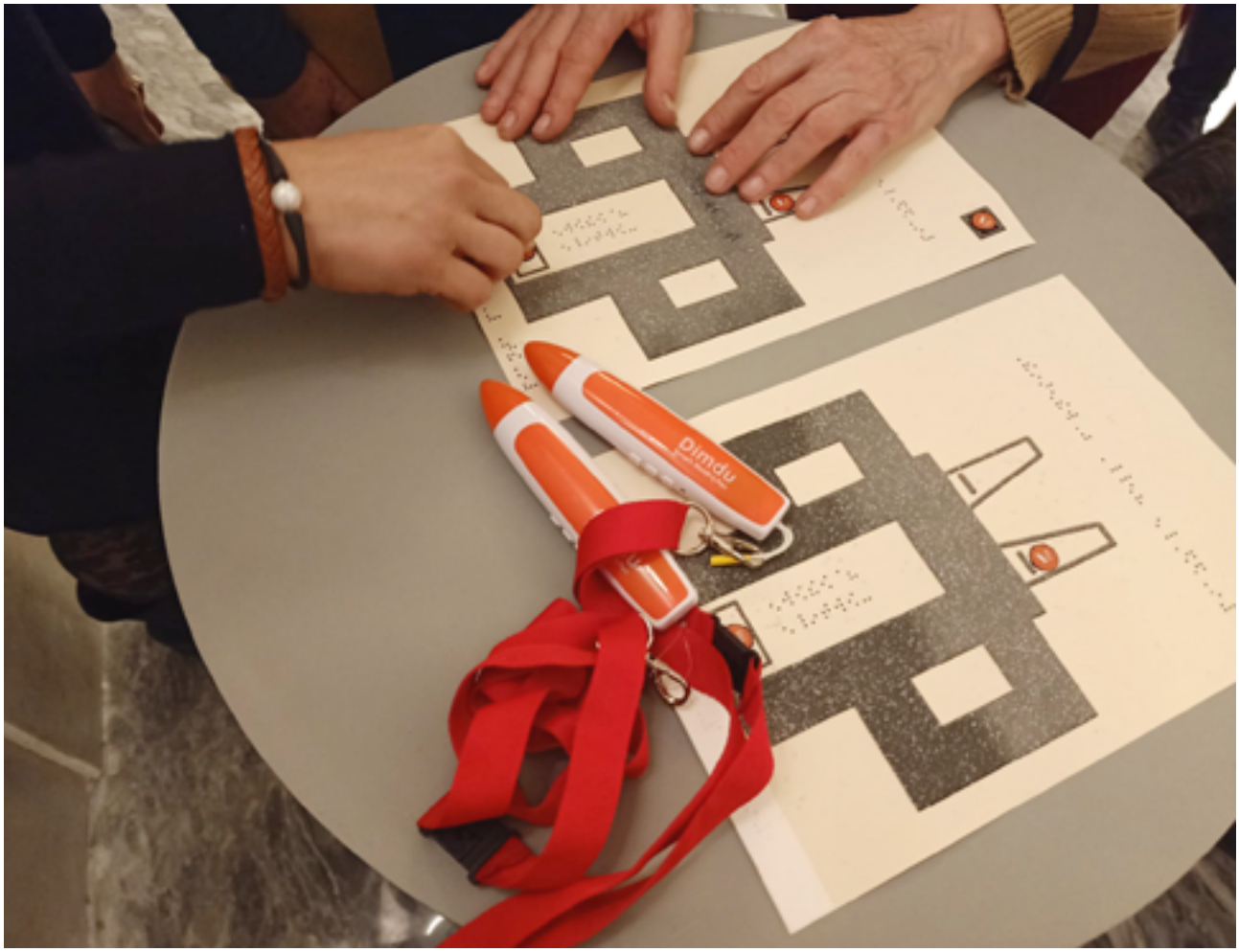


Accessible texts and audio pen

The Museum writes and revises **critical and descriptive texts on works of art** and cultural sites in order to make them inclusive for people with visual impairments.

On request, it makes **audio recordings** of the texts and, if required, loads them into an **audio pen**, which works without a data connection. The audio pen is a technological pen able **to play the audio file** stored inside it, which can be listened to through the built-in speaker or with headphones.

The voice is activated by placing the optical reader at the pen's tip on **special numbered stickers** about 1 centimetre in diameter; the adhesive stickers, which can be identified by touch because they are raised, can be applied to media of various kinds (caption, information panel, booklet, object). The Museum supplies the complete kit: audio pen, USB charging cable and four sheets with 800 stickers.



Tactile audio guide

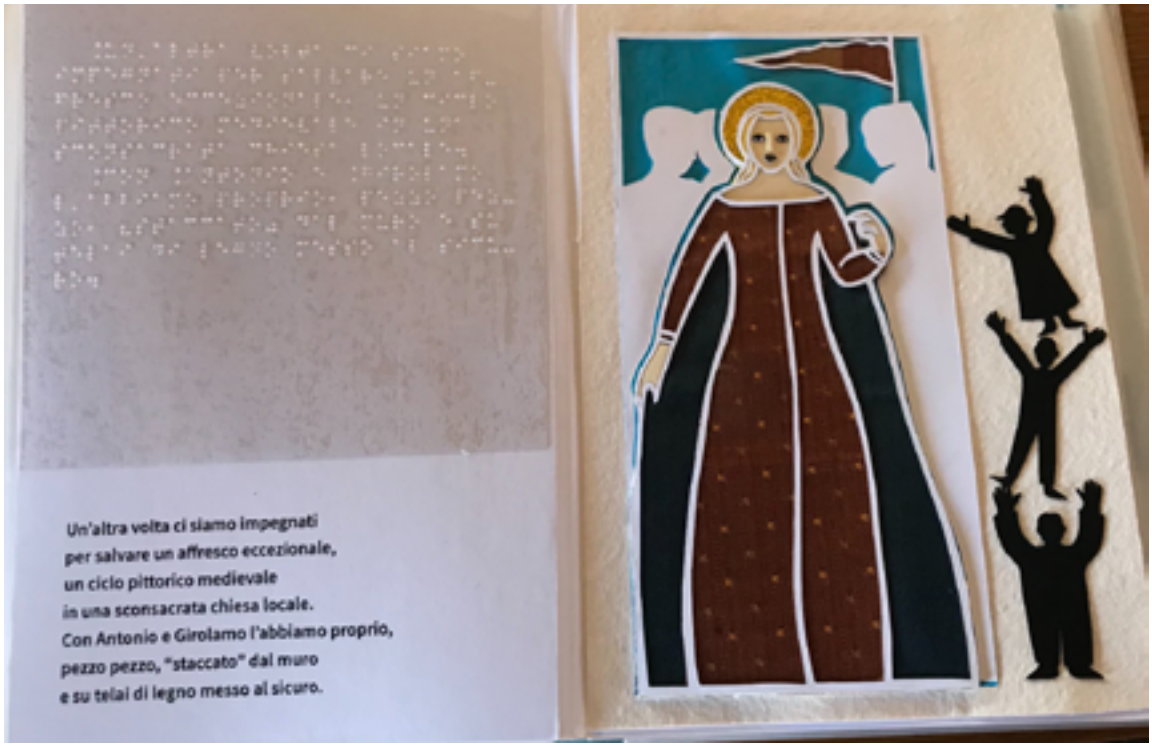
The guide is in **pocket format**, with a maximum of 8 pages. It features **black-print titles** transcribed in Braille, accompanied by **stickers** for listening to the corresponding **audio track** with the audio pen, and **raised-line drawings** on microcapsule paper or made with polymaterial collage. The work includes design, editing of the texts, graphic layout, hardbound cloth-covered binding, and the voice audio, produced with artificial intelligence, in mp3 format.

An ideal solution for outdoor locations.



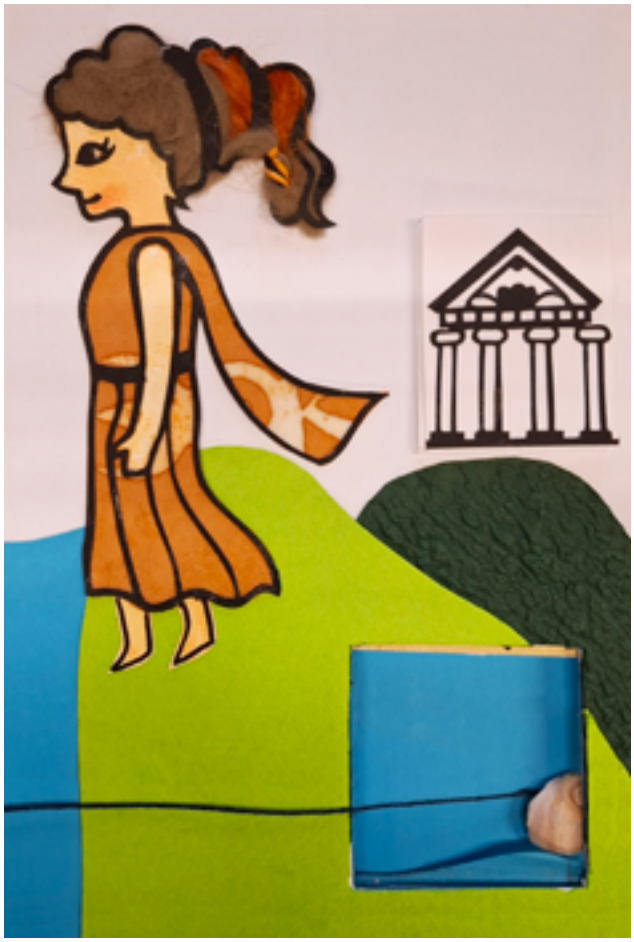
Tactile books

A tactile book is a book that can also be read with the hands, in which the **images** are **raised** and the **text** is in both **Braille** and large-print black type.
The images are made by cutting out shapes and using materials of different textures, following appropriate criteria of tactile and visual legibility.
Once the storyboard has been defined with the client, the Museum staff write the story, create the tactile images and bind the book.
The tactile book is a **pleasurable discovery** for everyone and a **tool for sharing** and **socialising**. It is an excellent way to introduce children to a museum and its collection.



Raised images from some tactile books.











Documentation and research centre

The Documentation and Research Centre holds about **two thousand publications** on **pedagogy**, **arts education**, **archaeology**, **aesthetics**, and **accessibility** of museum collections and heritage for people with disabilities. It has raised-relief plates, tactile resin bas-reliefs, print and large-print texts, Braille texts and videos. The Centre's material can be consulted on site by appointment.

Publications include:
"L'arte contemporanea e la scoperta dei valori della tattilità"
(Contemporary Art and the Discovery of the Values of Tactility)
A. Grassini, A. Socrati, A. Trasatti, Armando editore, 2018.

"Per un'estetica della tattilità. Ma esistono davvero arti visive?"
(Towards an Aesthetics of Tactility: Do Visual Arts Really Exist?)
A. Grassini, Armando editore, 2019.

"L'accessibilità al patrimonio museale e l'educazione artistica ed estetica delle persone con minorazione visiva" (Accessibility to Museum Heritage and the Artistic and Aesthetic Education of People with Visual Impairment)
Various authors, handbook of the Omero State Tactile Museum, on USB stick.



Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), Madonna in Glory with Saints Francis and Blaise – Ancona (translation into high relief).



MUSEO TATTILE STATALE OMERO

MINISTERO DELLA CULTURA

MUSEI ITALIANI

#MuseoOmero

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