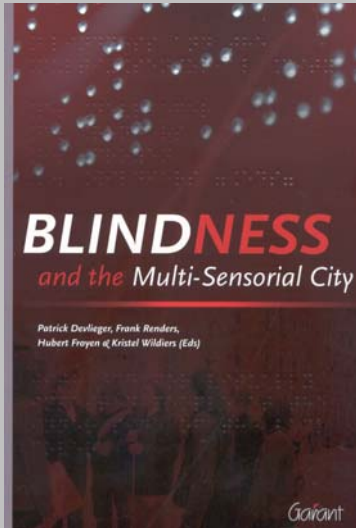


Blindness and the multi-sensorial city

P. Devlieger, F. Renders, H. Froyen, K. Wildiers



What is the result of developing a very specific dialogue, between people with a visual impairment and non-disabled people, in a very specific environment, the historic environment of a city?

This dialogic process, which defines a cultural model of disability, is the central theme in this book. It builds on the need for adapting and modifying the environment rather than the person. This book envisions the making of a multi-sensorial city, one in which a visual aesthetics is questioned by the need for functionality, other forms of perception such as tactile and auditory, and considering the co-existence of the historical and the supermodern, including the impact of new technologies. By taking visual limitations as a starting point, fresh departures are taken with questions on the development of a local accessibility policy, the design of multi-sensorial environments, and possible applications in tourism and education. At a more fundamental theoretical level, this book inquires about the nature of disability, the city, and their dialectics.

This book resulted from concrete activities in and around the city of Leuven (Belgium) on the occasion of the 2003 European Year of Persons with a Disability that became known by its acronym VIPHEC (Visually Impaired People in Historic European Cities). Existing efforts into a policy of access in the city of Leuven were to be given a new dynamic impulse with scholarly, policy, and education oriented activities. Throughout this book a creative way of working aims at win-win situations, in collaboration with disabled people, i.e., by validating expertise and towards the outcome of a better urban environment and greater access. The ideas and practices in this book are future oriented. A link between theory, practice, and policy is endeavored.

The Editors

Patrick Devlieger is associate professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Leuven (Belgium) and research assistant professor at the Department of Disability and Human Development, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Frank Renders is a graduate student researcher in anthropology at the University of Leuven.

Hubert Froyen is professor in architecture at the Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg.

Kristel Wildiers is equal chances consultant at the City of Leuven.

The Contributors

Gerlinde Bellefroid, Meenu Bhambani, Vandana Chaudhry, Constance Classen, Karin De Coster, Patrick Devlieger, Marta Dischinger, Jan Engelen, Hubert Froyen, Brendan Gleeson, Kevin Hetherington, Peter Howell, Julia Ionides, Gerrit Loots, Seema Malik, David Mellaerts, Vinko Penezié, Frank Renders, Kresimir Rogina, Gwendolien Sabbe, Paul Sullivan, Gerrit Van den Breede, Heidi Vartder Poorten, Harry Viaene, John Wakefield, Claire Wickham, Kristel Wildiers.

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