[OPENING MUSIC: "BLUECOAT" by JOSH HENDERSON]

TOM WALKER: Hello, my name's Tom Walker. Welcome to this Deaf and Disability Arts podcast, which this time is featuring Deep End, an exhibition by the neurodivergent and disabled Australian artist Amy Claire Mills. Deep End is being jointly hosted by Dada and the Liverpool Biennial at the Bluecoat in Liverpool City Centre. It's an immersive sensory installation that invites exploration through touch, sight and sound. The other day I met up with three other disabled people and as we had a look round the installation we chatted about what they could see and I asked them for their interpretations of the various exhibits. So the people you're going to hear from then are Denise Armstrong, Shaun Fallows, Adrian Watts from the Liverpool Biennial, Tom Rooney and Ray McMahon representing Blue Room, which is the Bluecoat's inclusive arts project for learning disabled and neurodivergent people, and Denise Kennedy from Dada. And the first voice you'll hear will be that of Denise Kennedy.

DENISE KENNEDY: Good morning and welcome everyone. I'm really happy that you're here. We're going to go and see Amy Claire Mills' exhibition, Deep End, which is part of the Liverpool Biennial. So we're here at the Bluecoat, which is where it is, so please follow me. Okay, so we're going to go down the ramp. Now we've entered the exhibition space and we're turning left into the Deep End.

TOM WALKER: I've just walked into the Deep End exhibition space here at the Bluecoat and what strikes me immediately is just how colourful everything is. For me as a visually impaired person I might not be able to see all the detail, but I can definitely see just how bright it all is. And to my left there is a wall, which is kind of like a mural, then in front of me over here there's a patchwork beach towel with various different fabrics. Over to my right there's a set of weights, they're very green and big, and here they are. And then in front of me is the Deep End itself, it's a blue projection onto a wall that has the words Deep End on it. And then just to my right there's like a float but it's a sandy colour. So that in a nutshell is what's in the room, but if I just play this to you...[squeaky noise] If you're wondering what that is, stay tuned to this podcast. Now one of the people who's here having a look at this artwork is Denise Armstrong. Denise is going to tell us what she can see and her immediate impressions, and Denise will be talking through her BSL interpreter.

DENISE ARMSTRONG: Hi everybody, lovely to be here today. It's such an interesting and very vibrant place and space to be in. The colours, there's lots of very bright yellows, and it's unusual to see that, but the artist herself is Australian and I think there's a lot of influence of those colours from there. Beach colours, obviously when you're from Liverpool the culture from Australia is very different, and it's like wow. It's the feeling of heat and warmth that you get from the colours and the vibrancy, and it's very positive. It almost feels like a child's playroom, but then when I read about the artist I understood the reasoning and the meaning to the pieces. I'm looking at the moment, I can only describe it, kind of a massive beach towel, but the materials that have been used are very different, different textures, really exciting for people who are maybe from a neurodivergent background. Obviously being deaf I can't hear myself, but I love the textures, I love the feel of this particular piece. There's one part of it, it seems to be made up of different towels, or I'm just going to get Tom to feel

that actually, but one of the pieces that's been used has got smiley faces on it. Each one, it's very clever the different textures that's been used. I'm determined to get Tom to feel some of these textures too.
TOM W: And I am doing, don't worry, I'm not standing here…I'm having a…

DENISE A: It's lovely what's been chosen, one of them has got dots on, but they're raised dots. Just all these different towels that have been put together to create one humongous beach towel.

TOM W: It feels like a beach towel, but as Denise is saying, it feels
as if there are different fabrics, so I'm not sure what it would be like to use this as a beach towel. I mean it would probably capture quite a lot of attention.

DENISE A: I think it would be amazing actually, [Denise is just saying] that I think it's so clever how she's put this together. And obviously the words that are around, there are some very carefully chosen words around. I thought it was a different language and then I realised, sorry I'm changing to the large mural which is at one end of the room.

TOM W: I was just going to ask you Denise about the large mural because I can see that there are pictures up there, multicoloured pictures, but I can't see the detail. So I'm relying on you completely Denise to give us a full commentary.

DENISE A: Oh right, okay, I'll do what I can. It looks like it's a Greek, for some reason, influenced it. It may be Zeus or Neptune. Really giant and very colourful. It definitely looks like a historical figure. They've got crowns on, they've got fishes. One of them has got a fish of half of their body. And then I've realised that the two birds are actually the liver birds. So they've been put into the piece too, which is really interesting but you've still got that beach resonance to it. And the words are underneath it. Nihil de nobis, sine nobis.

TOM W: Nothing about us without us, something like that. Nothing about us without us.

DENISE A: Yes, exactly. I was really drawn to that. I was very impressed that actually Latin had been used and I thought that was really clever and very unusual.

TOM w: And what have we got over here Denise? I can see a big green thing. It looks huge but I don't know what it is. And then behind it there's something blue. So if we could walk over there you could just tell me what there is if you don't mind.

DENISE A: Yes, of course I can, yes. Do you want to feel this Tom?

TOM W: [SOUND OF HAND HITTING INFLATABLE PLASTIC] Oh!

DENISE A: Yeah, they're bright green.

TOM W: Wow!

DENISE A: They're absolutely massive. To be honest with you, when I first arrived I was a little bit, I wasn't as keen on these as I was but as I walked round the installation it really did start to make me think. And they also almost look like gym barbells that have been made bigger but I think they're to do maybe with floats. Maybe linked to being healthy, being fit. It's very clever because this is green and it's a lovely calming green even though it's quite bright. And I think I've worked with neurodivergent children and they're very, very drawn to this particular kind of colour green. It's a very calming colour for them. But I really, really was drawn to, I could look for hours and hours and hours at the video of actually what is projected on there is the sea or just waves or the ocean. There's different ways of looking at it.

TOM W: Now it's funny because I can see that there's a big blue screen in front of us or projection onto a wall and I think the lettering says deep end.

DENISE A: It does, yes, yes.

TOM W: Shall we go over and have a look?

DENISE A: You can tell me if I'm going too fast.

TOM W: No, no, you're doing great. You carry on. You've given me a real good interpretation of what's happening here.

DENISE A: Okay, well we've got projected… I just… made me feel so relaxed. I literally could stand here looking for hours. You look like you're looking into a pool of some kind, whether it be a shallow end, you know, but you do get just the feeling and the movement. It's such a calming projection and I found it so interesting. So we've got the measurements around the side. We've got 16 metres, 14 metres and I think that might be linked to the depths of a swimming pool perhaps and that's just very clever. And again, the culture, the numbers are interesting to see too. It just was interesting for me.

TOM W: There's one thing that's caught my attention, which is it looks very yellow and there's something red or pink on top of it. What would that be?

DENISE A: Yeah, it looks to me like almost what a bouncy castle's made out of. I think it's, oh, somebody was just saying to me, I think it's like an oversized float that someone might use. We've got two pink dolphins on it. One of the dolphins has got silver sequins along it. And this big yellow floatation device, whatever it might be. [sound of hand hitting inflated plastic]

TOM W: Here it is.

DENISE A: It's representative of the sand. I think that's why that colour's been used specifically for this. And it's almost like a bouncy castle.

TOM W: What's the overall message of this exhibition for you? What d you take away from this, Denise?

DENISE A: When I first arrived here, I was struck straight away by the green. It gives you overall a feeling of being in a beach or being by some water and very relaxing. Yeah, very relaxing. That's the first impression I had. But then when I started to look in detail and more deeply at things, I realised it was like a metaphor for different things. Yeah, not in a political, in a beautiful way. It's a metaphor for manY things.

TOM W: Can I just turn to politics briefly? What are the access challenges for you, Denise, of being a deaf person working in the arts?

DENISE A: Access for me as a deaf person, I wasn't allowed to be me is what I felt. Yeah, I almost felt like for a lot of my life that I've been trying to be made to be hearing. But, you know, I've grown up in a hearing world, I realise that. But I do have a deaf world and I feel like I was trying to be forced to fit in to the hearing world. And that takes away my personality, my growth as an artist, my development. So thankfully I started sign language when I was 10 or 11. So quite a bit later. And that was when I found my deaf identity as an artist, as somebody who was interested in the arts. Models are very important to me. I remember pictures a lot, very pictorial. I can remember things in a great detail. So I think when I was brought up, it was a lot of medical models as opposed to social. So hearing technology, even giving you hearing aids was about trying to make you fit into a hearing world. But as an artist, I think it saved my life being a deaf artist, finding different ways to be myself and allowing my own expression. And sometimes arts brought me back to being a child.

TOM W: Is ableism still a problem in the arts?

DENISE A: Yes, I think it is. I've always, you know, DaDa support so many different artists. They try to change people's ways of thinking. And I think just speaking for myself as a deaf person in a very positive way, there's a lot of positivity, giving people the recognition and the opportunity within my deaf culture as well to be able to give back that hearing people don't actually have. You know, a lot of non-disabled hearing people benefit a lot from deaf culture. So thankfully, I'm a confident person. Yes, I feel good about my deafness, my deaf identity.

TOM W: How does the arts need to change for you as a deaf person to make sure you feel fully included?

DENISE A: For me, my childhood, athletic when I was growing up, and that was a way of expressing myself. I used to watch my mum and dad in the 1970s. Mum and dad used to love dancing to rock and roll music. So I used to watch it. I loved to dance myself. And then I remember when I was at school, I wasn't allowed music, we didn't do drama or dance because the teacher of the deaf would always be focused on trying to make us speak perfectly. And I used to pray. I used to pray for my teacher of the deaf to be ill so I could escape and go to drama. I love dancing. And I think that's why I studied contemporary dance. So dance, colours. My grandfather as well, he was a

painter himself. He used to sell paintings in Newcastle. And those paintings used to be, I link it into dance. So art itself is my music.

TOM W: Well, Denise, thank you very much indeed for taking me around and showing me this exhibition.

DENISE A: Thank you very much for having me today.

TOM W: Thank you.

SHAUN FALLOWS: This looks like a beach towel. It is a beach towel. And the fabric, do you know what I mean? It looks like one of the tapestry things. And I've noticed, I've just noticed now, you know, the smiley face.

TOM W: That was the voice of Shaun Fallows, who's a writer and poet. And he's having a look round the exhibition now. And he's got plenty to say about quite a lot of the exhibits. Shaun, where are we starting?

SHAUN: For me, the first thing I did notice was the deep end in the lettering.

TOM W: Should we go over and have a look?

SHAUN: Yeah, yeah.

TOM W: Do you want to lead on?

SHAUN: Yeah, for me, you know, it made me, to me, it was saying that like, through no fault of our own, disabled people are born in the deep end. But I don't think that's necessarily as bad as it sounds, because if you can adjust early on to the deep end, then everything else becomes easier, you see, because for me, that mirrored how I feel with me, with my own life, do you know what I mean? Like when I was younger, there was so many things where like, cerebral palsy, or any disability, it doesn't come with an instruction manual. So like, me mum would say like, you know, why is he taking a bit longer doing this? Is he going to get, is he going to get to this point? Is he going to adjust? And you just figure things out as you go. So that for me, you know, that's what that meant with the deep end that it was, and also it's interesting that for me, the letters of the deep end, they're like kind of shiny and metallic. So it says that we thrive in the deep end. Do you know what I mean? And I think that is, I think everybody's different, but that's how I feel, do you know what I mean? Because I've had the hardest bit first, then everything else is getting easier as I get older, and I feel like my life is better now than it definitely was at the beginning.

TOM W: Now this thing in front of us here, Sean, some people have said it might be a float. Do you think that could be a metaphor in some ways for our lives as disabled people?

SHAUN: Yeah, I mean, I think like, I mean, I found poetry, I always say it by accident. I was at one night and I'd had too much Guinness and I just thought, well, I can have

a, I can do that. And I think it was the Guinness that kind of tricked me. But that was my float, do you know what I mean? And I feel like whether it's fate or by accident, I feel like that was my thing to kind of make me broaden it as a person, develop as a person. And then as I kind of evolved with that, I realised that I like a lot of comedy. I didn't realise that before poetry. And then suddenly you can trick people's brain a bit because I think they expect you to be quite down about a lot of stuff. And don't get me wrong, I am quite often you get so kind of bogged down with it that at times that feels like it consumes a lot of your time. But then I realised again, you get some perspective back and you feel, oh, well, I can still go to Gregg's, I can still have a coffee, I can still wander around and look at things.

TOM W: Other pastries are available! Let's start over here then, Shaun. Just tell me what you can see on the wall immediately opposite the deep end installation.

SHAUN: Yeah, it is the mural. And interestingly for this bit, when I first came in, I didn't really notice the kind of the props and the rubber ring kind of thing on the floor and the floats. The first thing I noticed was the kind of Neptune fellow doing weights. And I think that stood out to me because before poetry, I played wheelchair basketball and I got really into fitness. And I think that was kind of, I wouldn't say a paranoia, but I think I wanted to prove that I wasn't knackered. So I just went hell for leather and I went as far as I could with distances. So I do like mini marathons for like Age UK. And I think that image says to me like, do you know what I mean? Like you don't have to have a perfect body to do, to do, to keep fit, to be well. Do you know what I mean? I think that's the biggest illusion that you have to have a perfect working body because I don't think anybody's really got that unless you get to like the gym bodies who are just constantly obsessed with it. I don't think the perfect body exists.

TOM W: Let's go over here, Shaun, because I can see something that's very bright over here and I want your interpretation of this. This is part of the mural and it looks very orange. I don't know if I'm allowed to touch it. [sound of fingers on wall] I just have. Anyway, what is it?

SHAUN: The liver birds. Yeah, I did notice that after you said it. And it is, I mean, I always, I said to my partner who's from Liverpool that I, you know, I keep asking her, you know, what were the real things? And it's the mythical creatures, the liver birds. So maybe that is this kind of message in the display that people, do you know what I mean? And it's
through no fault of their own sometimes people, if they've not grown up with disability, we are seen as like, you know, as kind of like mythical things. Do you know what I mean? Like people don't know about my disability until you tell them. And there's so many kind of ins and outs. I always, throughout my life, like you, because it's the only kind of figurehead disability is that you get, you get compared, you know, people say, oh, is it like Stephen Hawking? And I say, not really. Do you know what I mean? It's nothing like Stephen Hawking, but I think that's because that's the only one that can cling on to. So every disabled person is Stephen Hawking in their eyes.

TOM W: Do you think this exhibition will help people to understand disability, the challenges that we face in some way?

SHAUN: Yeah, I think so. I mean, especially with the, you know, I didn't understand the Latin, but that is interesting with the Latin slogan, you know, nothing about us without us, because so many people as well seem to want to speak for me. And I can, as you can see, I can do it myself.

TOM W: I'd have never guessed.

SHAUN: Yeah. Do you know what I mean? So that is a big frustration. Do you know what I mean? While I understand where I went to school, like there was a lot of severe disabilities who, who, who again, you know what I mean, through no fault of their own, they can't speak. I think it's important to sort of, that able bodied people realise that we, we can speak and like, you know, with some things you have got a set idea of, or you, or you want to plan things or you want to do things, you've got ambition, you know, and I think that's something that people sort of need to get their head around, that you're not just sitting at home eating Kit Kats and watch it tell you, you want to live and you want to be involved with life. I suppose people can take away whatever they want, because that's, but if they took away for, for me, if they took away the fact that people, do you know what I mean, like we've adjusted to the deep end, we're managing in the deep end and, and for me, that's what I take away from it.

TOM W: From an access point of view, how easy was it for you as a wheelchair user to get into the blue coat itself and into this exhibition?

SHAUN: Ah, it's, that, that bit's, that bit's like really good. It's amazing. Do you know what I mean? I live in Wigan and I think the coach will think I'm always having a go at them, but there's a lot of, you know, buildings where they could try a lot harder with access. They could include that if they wanted to. So to come to a building like the blue coat where you, you don't have to beg, you don't have to ask, you don't have to do anything. You just stroll in and you can, you can have a coffee and you can stroll in here and you can, I can wander around wherever I want. And it's, it's nice not to be able to have to ask. That's amazing.

TOM W: And when it comes to accessibility more generally in the arts, how accessible is it as a profession for you?

SHAUN: I think sometimes, I think with stuff like Dada, it, it, it, it's easier, but I've been to a lot, I've been to quite a few open mics now where it is, it does feel elitist. It's just the, the, the, the access is often down in basements, sort of really, really small bars and you're excluded from that. And that has to change.

TOM W: I guess you're always having to think, aren't you?

SHAUN: Yeah. Do you know, I mean, it, it's, and it, and it is, that is weird because you want to just focus on what you, what your poetry is about, but you get so flustered trying to get in a building, you, you're almost knackered before you get on stage because you've had to, you've had to climb a hurdle to get in, in the building. You

know, Dada's not always around to kind of push it. So, and you, you feel a bit on your own then because, you know, I could mention access riders and things, but a lot of small pokey pubs haven't even heard of access riders. They say, what is that? You know? So it has got a long, a long way to, to go like that. But I think you just have to keep being annoying really and...

TOM W: Keep pushing.

SHAUN: Yeah, yeah. Just keep irritating people. When I try and do comedy stuff, I always feel like you have to be subtle, but this exhibition shows as well that you, if you want to make a point, you don't always have to be subtle, do you? I mean, that's, that's a purple dolphin, what looks like, you know, the quality street, the purple quality street on a lilo. But yeah, it's good.

TOM W: So Adrian, we're just walking into the exhibition space. Just describe it for me, if you would.

ADRIAN WATTS: Absolutely. So we're in Amy Claire Mills' installation. It's a co-commission with Liverpool Biennial and Dadafest. And...

TOM W: So what's the background to this deep end exhibition? Well, fortunately, Adrian Watts from the Liverpool Biennial is here. He's the access coordinator. Just give us an idea of what the background to all of this is.

ADRIAN: Amy Claire Mills is a disabled artist from Sydney, Australia, and she has created an installation that's an indoor swimming pool with no water. So basically, the floor is carpeted in blue. Around the walls, there are two shades of blue, dark navy on the bottom and a pale watery blue on the top, with a white line going all the way along the walls with metre depths painted in numbers around the walls. Over on the far end, which we call our deep end, there's a little shelf with silver sequined padded letters in spelling out the words deep end. And then dotted around the room, there are lots of pool paraphernalia. So Amy has created this installation inspired by third spaces, which are places where quite often disabled people go for therapy, hospital appointments, things like that. But in swimming pools especially, they're often places of therapy, but they also become part of the social network for disabled people. So she's created a really fun environment that people can gently touch the installations, all the little things. There's a big inflatable yellow pool float on the floor. There are pool supports, pool weights, massive giant green pool weights that look a bit like dumbbell weights. There's a giant towel made out of patchwork towels in lots and lots of different colours and textures, hanging on a rail on one side of the installation. And on the far, which we call the shallow end, the far wall, Amy has created her version of the Liverpool Crest. So it's like comic book characters based on the Liverpool Crest, which features liver birds, King Neptune, and a merman. And they have inflatables around their waist, water wings on their ankles. They're carrying bits of poolside paraphernalia. Lots of things around the room. There are pool supports and pool floats made out of soft sculpture. Amy Clare Mills is a textile artist. There are big padded stuffed dolphins in various shiny colours of pink, because that's inspired by the fact that Liverpool swimming pools in the 60s and 70s had dolphin shows in them. So we

don't do that anymore because of animal safety, but basically the stories about the swimming pool, the dolphin shows that people saw in Liverpool, swimming baths in the 70s and 60s, were a big... She did lots of interviews and visited lots of swimming pools in Liverpool, and lots of people had memories of those things, so she wanted to recreate those things. So this whole exhibition has been inspired by Liverpool swimming pools, and she's created that with her Aussie sense of humour.

TOM W: Tell me about Amy herself.

ADRIAN: So yeah, as I said, Amy is from Sydney, Australia. She's a textile artist. She's done lots of international exhibitions. She often uses textiles, padded stuffed textiles, to comment on what it's like to be a disabled person and to be in a medical environment. She's got a really famous exhibition that she did that was called... It's gone out of my head, unfortunately.

TOM W: Don't about it.

ADRIAN: But it was about unsolicited advice that people get. So it's like, just do some exercise. Why don't you go and see the doctor? Or why don't you do this? Why don't you do that? Lots of unsolicited advice that a lot of disabled people get in their lives.

TOM W: I'm often told, why don't you get some glasses?

ADRIAN: Exactly, exactly. So she made a load of stuffed cushions with lots of applique and embroidery on them that spelled out all these questions. And that was a really fun exhibition that she did in the past. And it inspired Dada to recommend Amy Claire Mills to Liverpool Biennial as a co-commission for this year's Biennial Festival. And so Marianne, our lead curator, she got in touch with Amy and she's come over and created this bespoke swimming pool environment here at the Blue Coat.

TOM W: Must have taken quite a lot of work when you look round.

ADRIAN: It absolutely did. She was working on putting this together for a full 12 months from when she did her proposal to actually making it happen.

TOM W: And when's it open?

ADRIAN: It's open along with the rest of the Biennial until the 14th of September here at the Bluecoat.

TOM W: Plenty of time if you want to come and have a look.

ADRIAN: Yes, definitely. So come. The Bluecoat is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 11 until 5 but you can check the Biennial website and the Bluecoat website to get detailed information. We've also got an access page on the Biennial website that has a wayfinding guide that shows you around all our exhibitions at the Biennial.

RAE McMAHON: We're at the exhibition Tom, shall we go and have a little look around?

TOM ROONEY: Fabulous, yes.

TOM W: So this is Tom Rooney who's a masterpiece artist and he's just literally come into the exhibition. What's catching your eye Tom?

TOM R: These amazing floats alongside me and these pictures on the walls and these coloured ones on the back wall just behind me, well just in front of me.

TOM W: Shall we go over and have a look?

TOM R: Yes.

RAY McMAHON: Tom, as a Blue Room artist you come down to the gallery quite often don't you?

TOM R: Yes.

RAE McMAHON: Have a little look. What are we looking at right now?

TOM R: What strikes me is the actual stripes on the actual fingertips. Where it's got bright red, underneath it's got green and underneath the green is blue. So what really strikes me is the actual green, the actual light blue where it's got thin lines. So as you look at the thin lines in the middle where your hand is, that's what really, really strikes me.

TOM W: This is a bit like a beach towel isn't it Tom, made of different fabrics?

TOM R: Yes.

RAE: There's lots of patterns as well isn't there Tom?

TOM R: Absolutely. Yes, so it's got different shade patterns plus there's like, as you see in the red there, it's got like pointing upwards. So one of them's pointing side on, one of them's pointing face up. So that's like a cross in other ways. So as you look at the cross, that's pointing downwards but like what Adrian said there, good explanation, it's like pointing upwards. It's absolutely amazing.

TOM W: What else has caught your eye Tom?

TOM R: You might not be able to see it but there's like a blue and white towel on the very, very top there and that's got like different shaped stars by the looks of it.

TOM W: And over to our left there's a big mural on one of the end walls there. Tell me about that, what strikes you? What strikes me is the, it's got like a...

RAE: This is a mural inspired by the Liverpool Crest isn't it Tom?

TOM R: That's the Liverpool Crest.

RAE: You can see this all over the city.

TOM R: Yeah, just appears out of nowhere. It's absolutely amazing. Always someone's got a red and blue microphone in their hand. It's absolutely amazing where it's all been laid out. That's what really, really strikes me.

TOM W: And just looking at the other side of the room Tom, there are the big green weights and there is a projection on the wall of the deep end. Shall we go and have a look at those?

TOM R: Yes.

TOM W: You lead on.

TOM W: What does this exhibition say about disability as far as you're concerned Tom?

TOM R: It's giving you full ideas of how it's all been laid out. And when I say full ideas that means that you can get the full picture from one direction and then you get information from the other direction.

TOM W: Amazing and in terms of access into the Bluecoat and into this exhibition, how was that for you?

TOM R: Absolutely a million dollars. Absolutely amazing. So there's a ramp going up, there's two entrances. One is for going in on the right. If you wanted to go to the art gallery, that's to the left. So you can either go on two ways, right or left.

TOM W: Tom, you helped to install some of the sounds to turn this into a slightly more sensory experience. Just talk us through the sounds and what was your thinking?

TOM R: The sounds are where you can get a bottle of water. [SOUND OF WATER BOTTLE BEING SHAKEN]

TOM W: Okay next one. Thank you Denise. Next one.

TOM R: And then this one. [SOUND OF RAINSTICK]

TOM W: What does this symbolise Tom?

TOM R: Well the way that I can pronounce it is like it's the rain. So as you go outside, it's not physically raining but as you fall downwards, it sounds like rain.

TOM W: And there's one more down there I think as well Tom.

TOM R: Which is this. [SOUND OF SQUEAKING]

TOM W: And what's this Tom? What does it represent?

TOM R: This represents the dolphin.

TOM W: And we've got the dolphin in front of you Tom now as well. So this represents the noise the dolphin would make.

TOM R: Yes, yes. I couldn't even say that better myself.

TOM W: And did this help to make this exhibition more accessible for visually impaired people?

TOM R: Yes. The reason why is because it's...

RAY: You think more sensory?

TOM R: So yeah, more sensory and more relaxing at the same time. And some people who want to have headspace, they can come in here to have headspace for a few hours to go and play with one of these.

TOM W: I'm in the exhibition space and standing literally by the projection of the deep end and it's got the words deep end written on it. And with me is Denise Kennedy and hopefully we'll take you out of the deep end and you'll feel comfortable and relaxed.

DENISE K: Wonderful. Yes. Hello. Yeah, I'm Denise. I'm the access coordinator for Dada and I've been absolutely thrilled to be able to be involved in organising this today between you and the artists.

TOM W: So Denise, tell me about the background, if you would, to this exhibition. Tell me about Amy Claire Mills as well.

DENISE K: Yeah, well, Amy Claire Mills is an artist that Dada has been aware of and I think worked with, in the past. And it's a co-commission between Dada and Liverpool Biennial. And DaDa put forward a number of names of artists who we thought would be interesting for Biennial to work with and Amy Claire Mills came out the winner.

TOM W: Some of the exhibits in here, Denise, are clearly tangible. They can be touched by visitors. That's the float. This is the weight here.

DENISE K: Yes.

TOM W: But how do you go about making this exhibition accessible to visually impaired people who would have maybe even less sight than me?

DENISE K: Well, you would definitely have somebody going around and explaining the sites. Not the sound, obviously, but I could come up and I can say, look, what we're seeing here now is very large inflatable green weights and they are posed, I suppose is the word, that they are very much like statues, like a sculpture in a sense. They are really set as sculptures.

TOM W: I mean, for me, I often feel quite excluded from exhibitions, from museums, because you can't touch stuff. But at least here, you can touch quite a lot of it because, of course, over here as well, if we just walk over to the beach towel, you can actually feel all the different fabrics on here as well. I mean, they've obviously gone to great expense to go out and find loads of different towels and beach towels. But what they've done, what Amy's done really cleverly is make it into a tapestry almost. And the different squares have been fixed together with a sort of a wavy, again, the waves coming into it, the wavy white banding around each join.

TOM W: What I like is that some segments of the beach towel are actually quite conservative and others are really, really bright and quite garish, aren't they? Like this one here is a green and a red one.

DENISE K: It's a stripey.

TOM W: And there's a stripey one here.

DENISE K: That's kind of quite comic. That's kind of old fashioned Victorian stripes, isn't it? The red and white. You know, the old swimming costumes that people, I think particularly men used to wear, or even women. But yes, it's... But I imagine they went and they went, well, it was a choice of... Yeah, that's got... There's one that's got suns on it. Others looks got patterns of sand, a bobbly one there that's, I suppose, is very sand-like. Yeah.

TOM W: I guess the accessibility challenge might be the mural over here, I suppose, and having to explain that.

DENISE K: Yes, absolutely. But I think if you, particularly if you live in Liverpool, you're aware of the sign, the... I've forgotten the word for it now.

TOM W: Symbolism.

DENISE K: The symbolism of Liverpool as a maritime city. So Amy's taken this and she's got, I suppose, Poseidon and Neptune in, as if they're going to the beach. So they're all dressed up with a rubber ring and the weights and...

TOM W: Thanks very much then to all of the contributors who've taken part in this podcast for their insights and interpretation. And if you want to see the installation, it's open at the Bluecoat from 11am to 5pm from Tuesday to Sunday until September 14th.

[END MUSIC – "BLUECOAT" by JOSH HENDERSON]