

Touching the Past: Tactile Models in the Interpretation of Places of Memory

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The paper presents a long-term project developed at the Department of Art Education, Faculty of Education, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, focusing on the interconnection between higher education, professional practice, and contemporary approaches to making cultural heritage accessible. The project centres on the creation of tactile models of selected architectural elements, works of art, and their details, enabling visually oriented cultural content to be experienced through touch. Although these models are primarily intended for people with visual or other disabilities, their potential extends beyond the framework of inclusive education and offers new possibilities for interpreting and experiencing cultural heritage among a wider public. The paper will present several specific models created within the project for important heritage sites in South Bohemia, including the Dominican Monastery in České Budějovice, Kratochvíle Chateau, and the Cistercian Monastery in Vyšší Brod. Attention will be paid not only to the process of their creation and their educational potential, but also to the possibilities of their application directly within the context of particular heritage sites and in the interpretation of sites of memory. The project demonstrates the potential of tactile models as a tool for promoting an inclusive approach to cultural heritage. By expanding traditional modes of perception, they encourage active and multisensory engagement with historical and artistic environments. At the same time, they contribute to strengthening the relationship between a particular place, its historical memory, and its contemporary cultural identity, while also illustrating the benefits of connecting university teaching with practical collaboration in the fields of heritage interpretation and accessibility.

