



Lisa Green shows the textured artwork she has created for blind people to enjoy.

# Artist caters to blind readers

## Animals' shapes felt on tactile diagrams

By **KEN BRADFORD**  
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**SOUTH BEND**

**L**isa Green saw the effect her art had on people. She paints with pointillism, with pinpoint dots of color. "I noticed how everyone wanted to touch my paintings," she said.

It made her think of Braille, the language of dots that allow blind people to read.

And she wondered, how do blind people enjoy art?

The answer, she found, is that most don't. If you "see" by touch, you're out of luck.

That's how she came up with her new project, a book titled "Now I See What You See."

It's similar to a typical child's picture book, with some text describing such animals as lizards, porcupines and chimpanzees.

The difference is, through tactile diagrams, blind readers will be able to feel the shape of the animals.

As far as she can tell, no one else has tried giving such detailed images to the blind.

She put the book together after working with the Indiana School for the Blind and the American Printing House for the Blind.

Copies can be ordered by phone for \$59 apiece at (888) 641-7185. For more information, customers can call Green's art store, Mona Lisa Surat's, 1917 Miami St., at (574) 251-0737.

Each book will be custom-made, so the waiting list for delivery is six to eight weeks.

She's also looking for people who want to help with the testing or who would donate to the school.

One of the ironies of her book is that she didn't really know any blind people before she started work on the book.

"I knew absolutely nothing about Braille," added the south-

side resident.

A graduate of Clay High School, she's taken some art classes but considers herself mainly self-taught.

This was a case of having to learn something else.

"I'm carving," she said. "I have to create a master blueprint for each picture."

The challenge is to turn the picture into a series of raised ridges. Slide your fingertips across the page and you get a sense of the drawing.

For someone whose only contact with a porcupine has been through words, it should be quite a thrill to feel the shape of the spines, she said.

"This gives the blind child something else to do," she said. "It's a whole new world."

Typically, blind people experience art through detailed descriptions, which they must translate into images in their minds.

Sometimes, instead, the attempt is to give the feel of a painting through music.

Green has patented her process for carving and printing. She said she's using up her life's savings while getting the books into the hands of customers.

If this book succeeds, she'll be ready to do another.

"I would get more elaborate with the next one I do," she said. "I'm sure I'll be getting into custom orders."

It makes her nervous, because this is a new venture for her.

The main feedback she's received is from the blind proofreaders, who enjoyed finding a new way to "see" things around them.

"I think the blind are ready for this," she said. "I think the world is ready."

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ABOVE: Lisa Green, who has created an art form for blind people, works in her studio at Mona Lisa Surat's, 1917 Miami St., South Bend.

LEFT: Lisa Green's book, "Now I See What You See," includes tactile diagrams so blind readers will be able to feel the shape of the animals.

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