

18:58

Monday 29th May

was the first time that Sarah painted with her eyes. The diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease meant Sarah's life was changing, and knowing that she would have to depend on others was difficult. However, her biggest challenge was the prospect of losing her ability to create art. Following consultations with therapists and engineers, Sarah was able to adjust to PCEye software that allowed her to communicate and paint through her eyes. This eye gaze technology has given Sarah new hope and has enabled her to carry on creating her masterpieces, reigniting her passion for art.



Case Study

Sarah Ezekiel



I couldn't live without the ability to create art. It is what makes me who I am.

The story

Sarah's life changed dramatically when she was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease at just 34 years of age. As the MND took the mobility of her hands, she faced the reality of relying on carers to do the simplest of tasks; a difficult fact for Sarah to come to terms with. Sarah experienced tough adjustments to her new life with MND, and particularly found the transition from being able bodied and living a normal life, to facing disability and mortality extremely frightening.

As a keen artist, a markedly harrowing aspect of her diagnosis was the fear of losing her ability to create her artworks, and as a consequence, lose passion for her vocation.

The solution

For Sarah, connection with the outside world and the ability to communicate with others was also fundamental part of her treatment plan, and facing so many changes, Sarah was adamant that she wouldn't lose this part of her life. After a period of assessment, Sarah's therapists recommended EZ Keys, a chin-switch controlled software application installed on her laptop. However, as Sarah's condition developed, she experienced neck pain from the chinstrap, and knowing that life without her laptop would be unimaginable, Sarah set about researching alternative products.

Through extensive online research and consultations with her therapist, Sarah learned about eye gaze technology. Knowing that this could be the perfect solution for her, she consulted with a team of engineers and began the process of installing and adjusting to the new Tobii PCEye software.

The turning point

As painting had been a passion of Sarah's long before the onset of her MND, the limits of assistive technologies led her to believe she would never be able to paint again. Through the help of therapists and Steeper engineers, Sarah was able to reignite her passion and paint again.

The first time Sarah painted with her eyes, she felt like her old self. Her passion and confidence grew immensely and now thanks to the PCEye, she is able to express herself through her eyes. Since using PCEye, Sarah has exhibited her work all over the world, including at the Royal Academy Schools in the UK and the Katara Art Centre in Qatar, and she is admired within the MND community for her tenacity and talent.

To find out more about Sarah visit:
www.assistive-technology.co.uk and
www.eyegazeartists.tictail.com