

Live Audio Description During a Film Shooting

Elena SV Flys / Antonio M. Villalba
TAI University Center for the Arts
elena.sanchezvizcaino@taiarts.com / antonio.villalba@taiarts.com
ARSAD 2025

1. Starting Point
2. Universal Design and Sound Performance
3. What is Audio Creation?
4. Objective and Case Study
5. Developing AD
6. Analysis and Comparison
7. Food for Thought

Research Questions

1

What would be the outcome if the audio describer became one more agent of the creative process?

Can we really talk about the same product?

Methodology

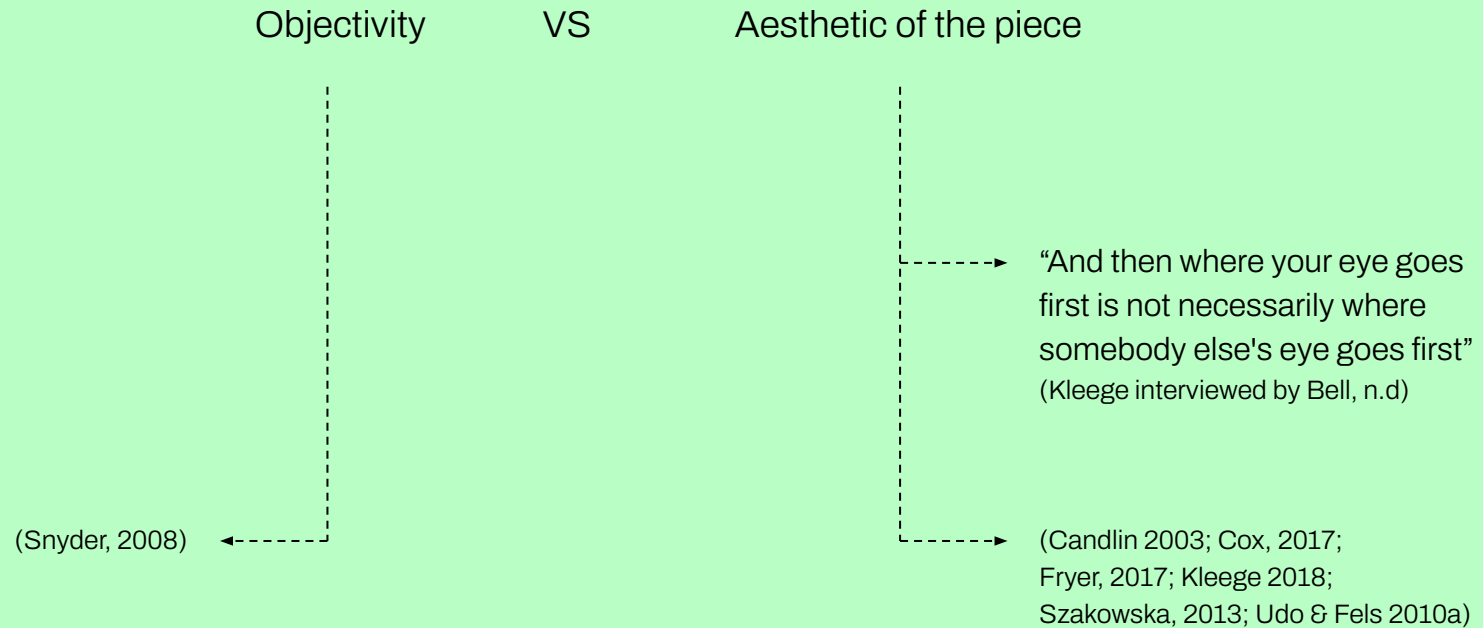
1

Ethnographic Case Study Approach:

- **On-Site Observations:** Documenting the integration and development of AD during filming, capturing real-time interactions and decision-making.
- **Focus Groups:** Engaging all creators in discussions about Audio Creation vs Audio Description.
- **Audio Description Guide Analysis:** Using AD guidelines to identify key categories for analyzing the audio descriptions in “PUGNA” (*CESyA, Audio Description Project, Netflix, University of South Carolina, Amberscript*).
- **Script and Video Analysis:** Examining AD scripts and footage to assess their narrative alignment, clarity, and adaptation to the film’s artistic vision.

Universal Design

2



Sound Performance in Cinema

2

From illustrated songs (Cook, 2019) to Katsudo Benshi (Burch, 1979; Dym, 2000)
sound performance has always been part of cinema.

White,
MUSIC DEALER.
501 & 503 DE KALB AVENUE,
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

THE LATEST WALTZ SONG AND CHORUS

THE LITTLE LOST CHILD

Sung with Great Success

BY

LOTTIE GILSON



Written by

EDW. B. MARKS

Author of

"DECEMBER and MAY"



Composed by

JOS. W. STERN



Don't fear little one, I'll take you home.



PUBLISHED BY **JOS. W. STERN & CO.,** 304 EAST 14th ST., N. Y.

LONDON
FRANCIS DAY & HUNTER
195 Oxford Street

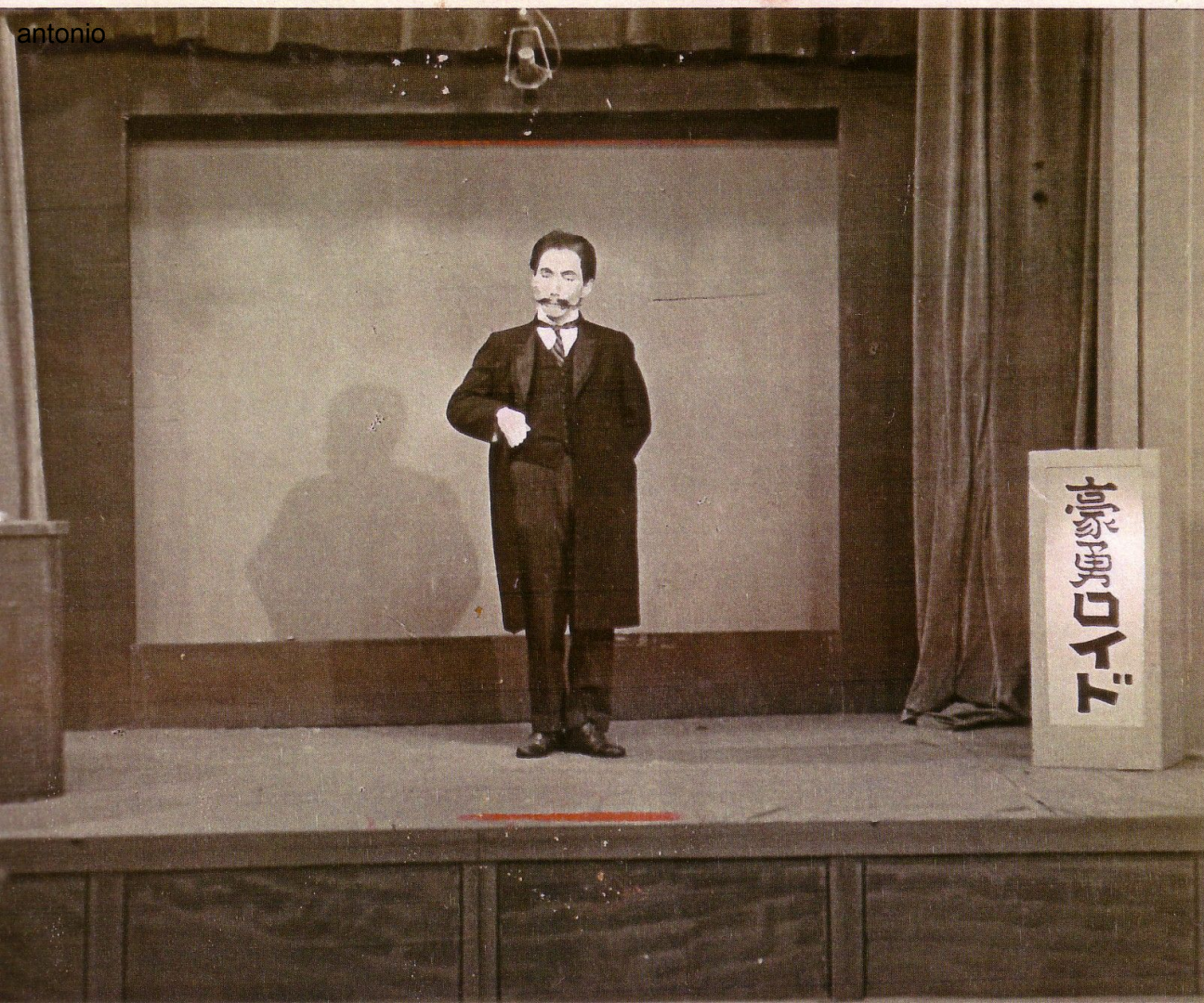
CHICAGO
NATIONAL MUSIC CO.
215 Wabash Avenue

NEW YORK
WM. A. POND & CO.
25 Union Square

BOSTON
OLIVER DITSON CO.
453-463 Washington St.

COPYRIGHTED 1894 BY JOS. W. STERN & CO. ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL.

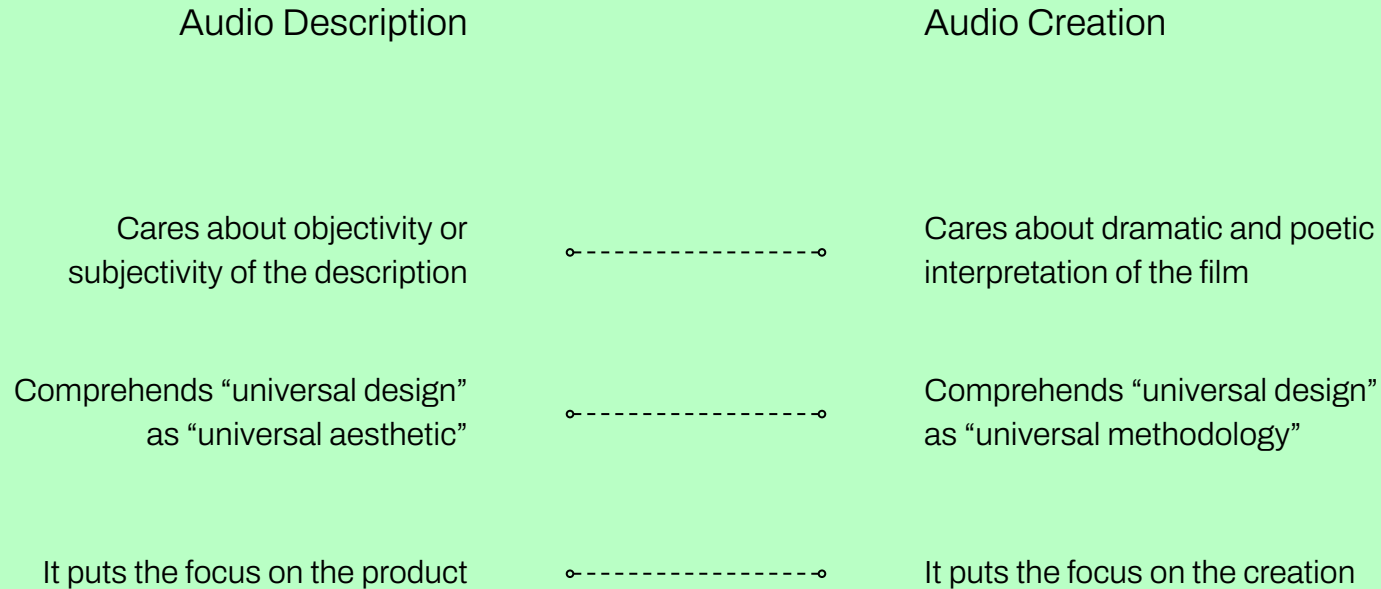
First Illustrated Song Music Sheet



Photograph of the benshi Shunsui Matsuda

What is Audio Creation?

3



Objective

4

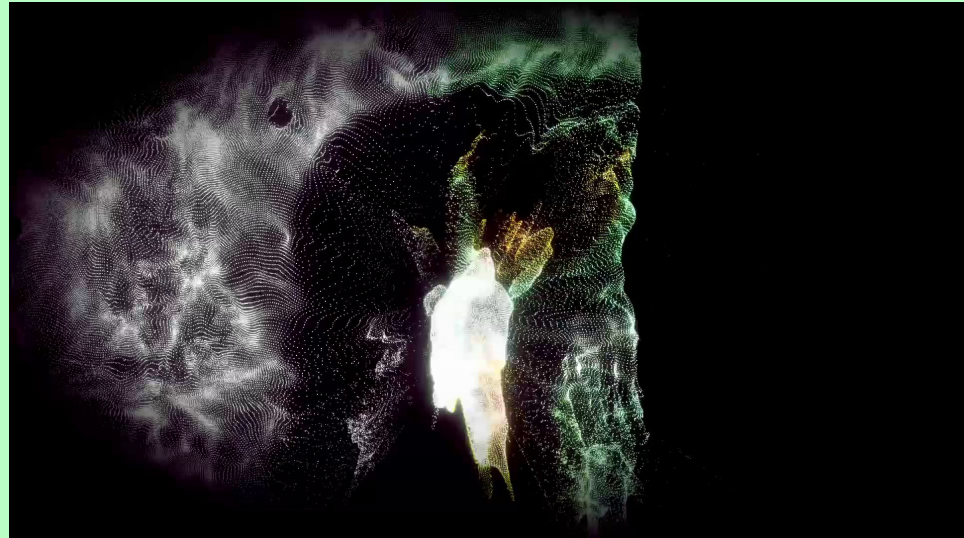
To compare different ways of AD with Audio Creation based on:

- Purpose
- Type of Content Description
- Rhythm
- Relationship with Soundscape
- Perspective
- Aesthetics of language or vocal delivery
- Metaphorical connections

Case Study

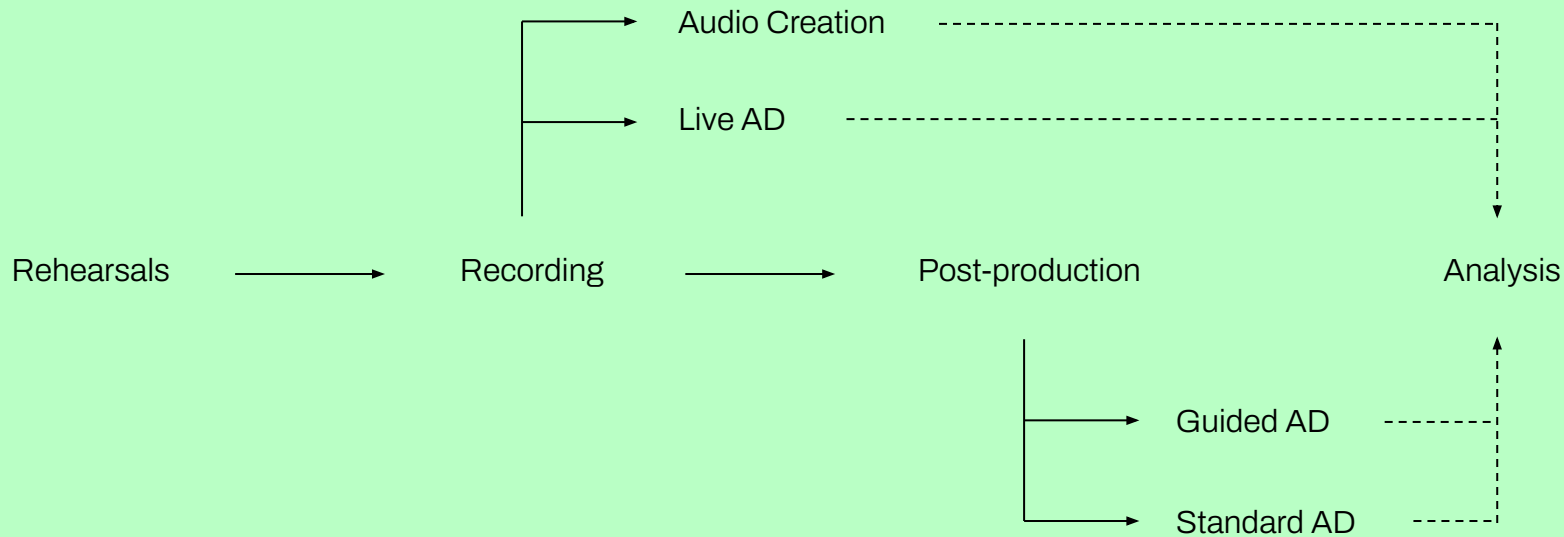
4

Experimental film project



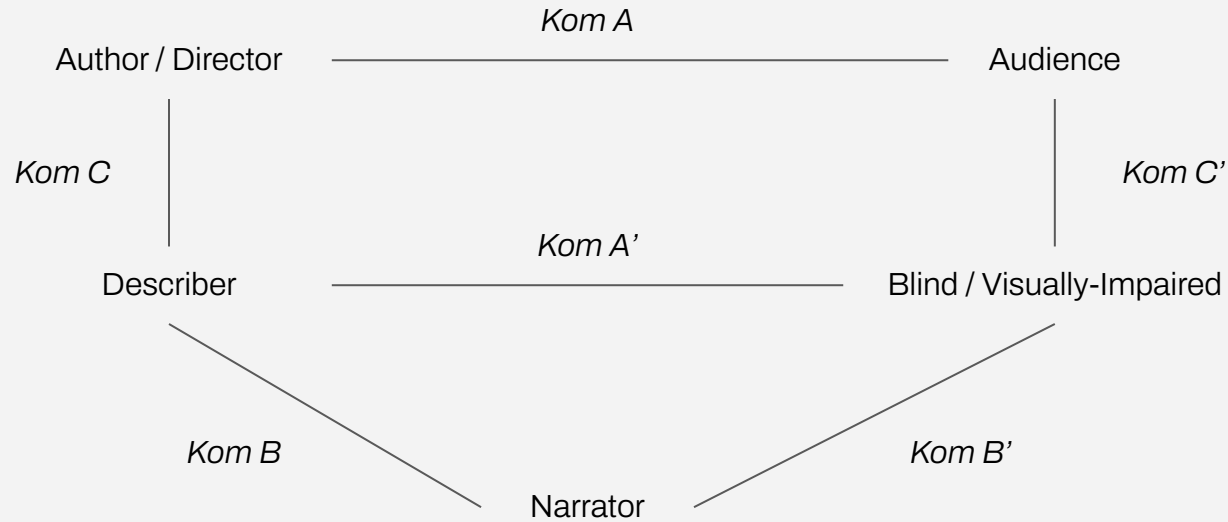
Developing AD

5



Communication in Cinema AD

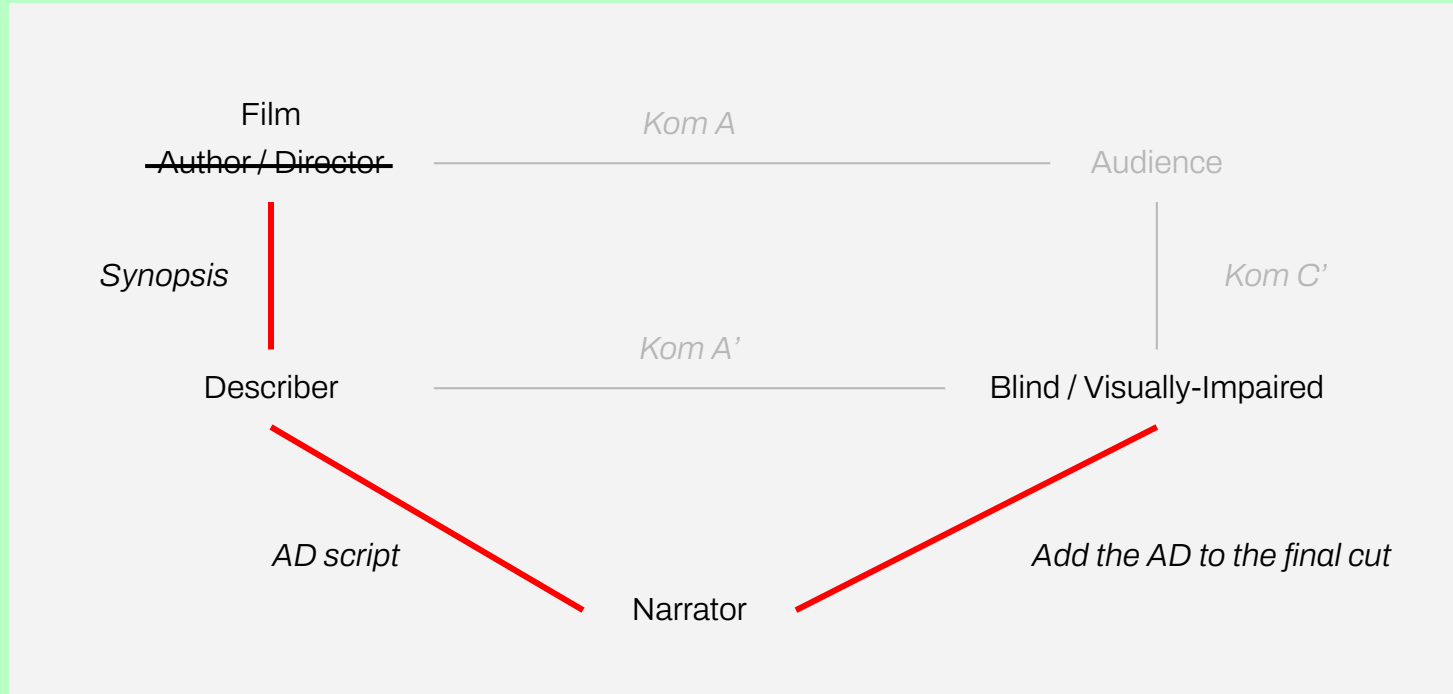
5



Bernd Benecke (2007)

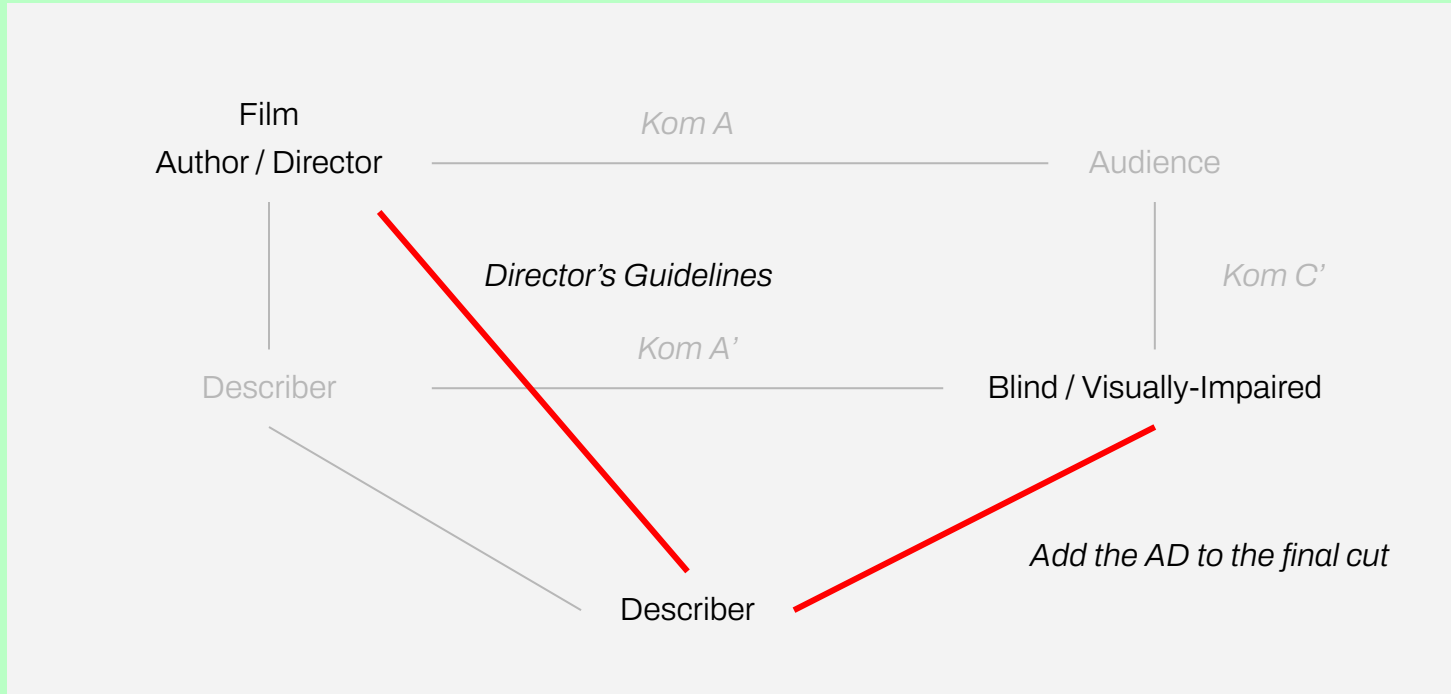
Standard AD

5



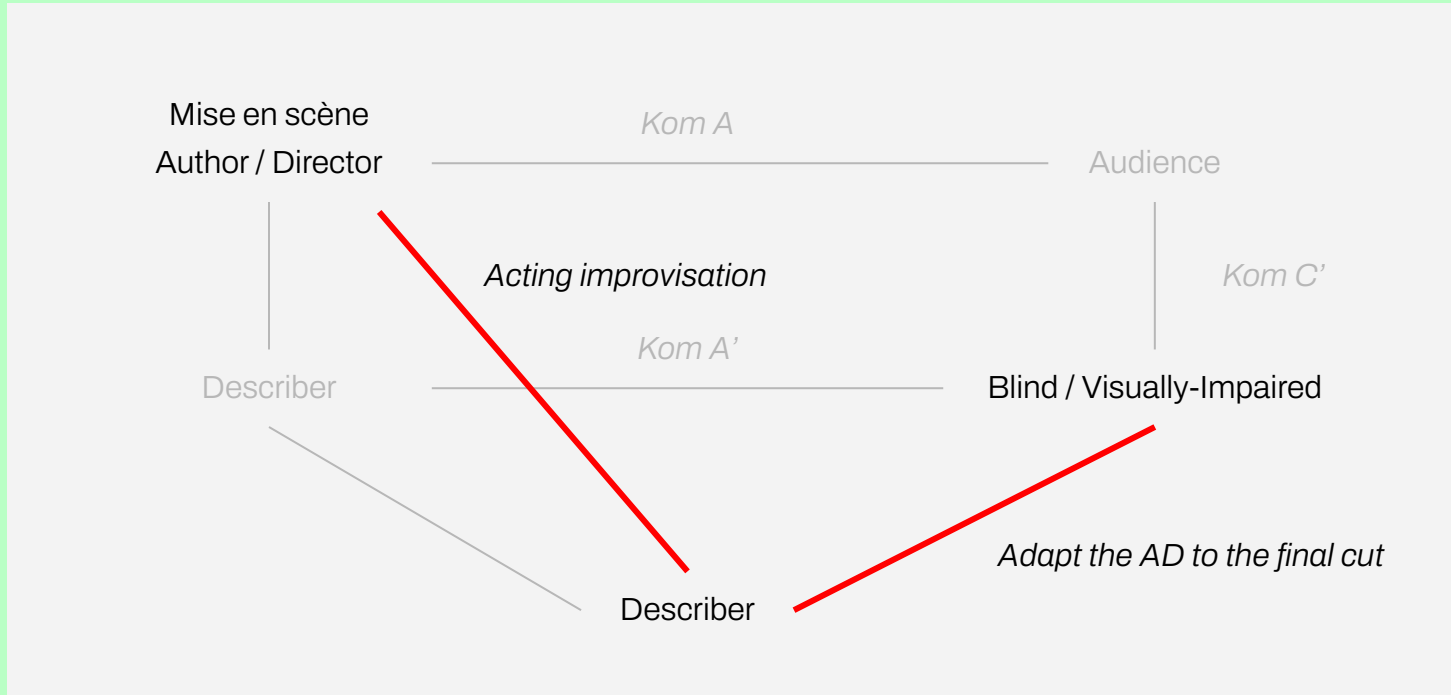
Guided AD

5



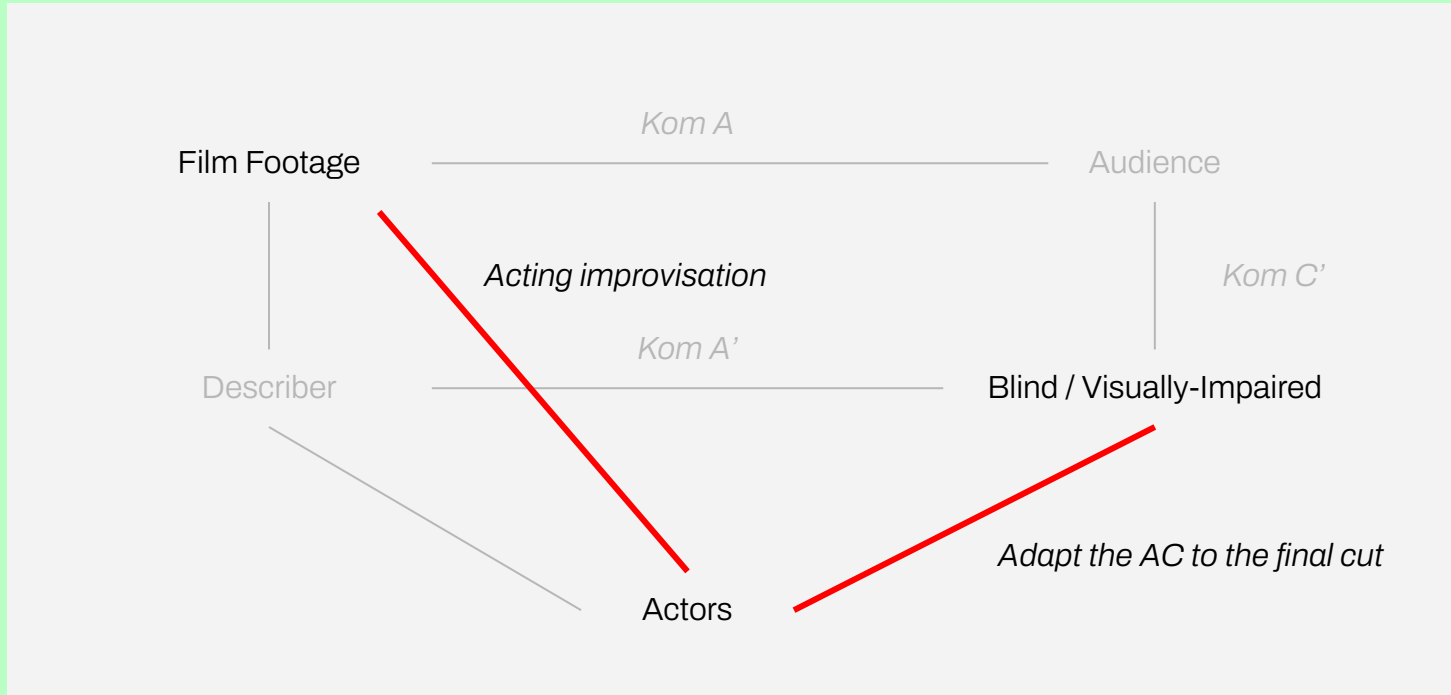
Live AD

5



Audio Creation

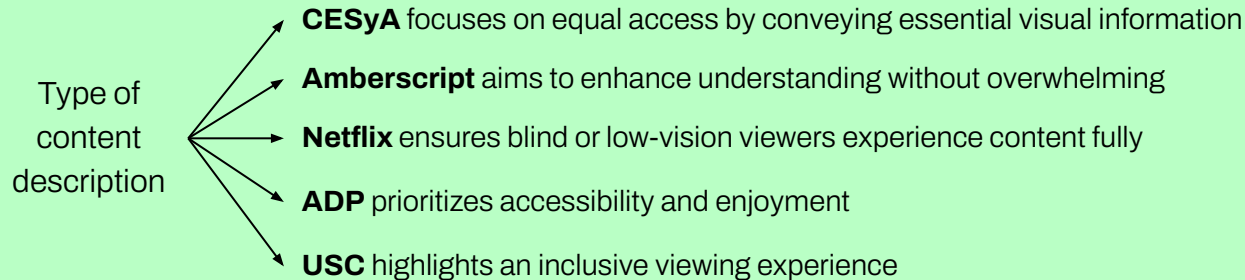
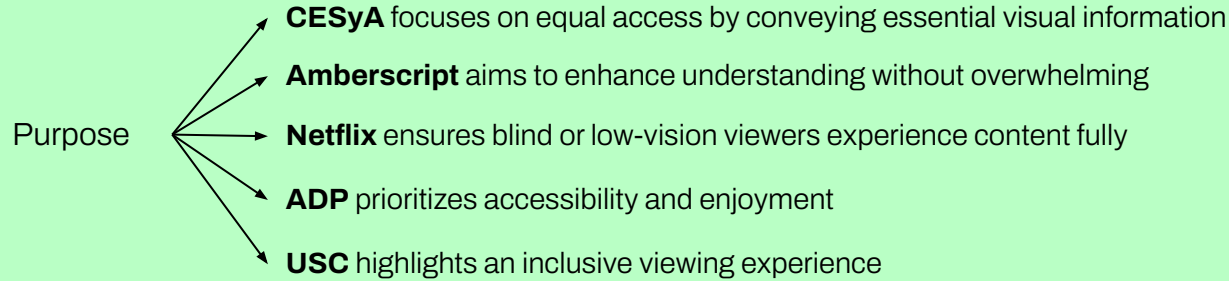
5

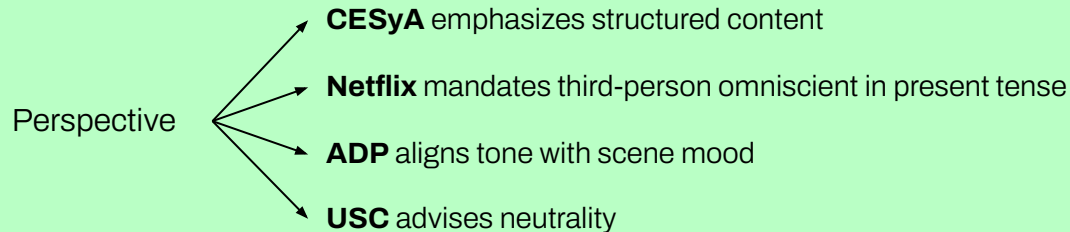
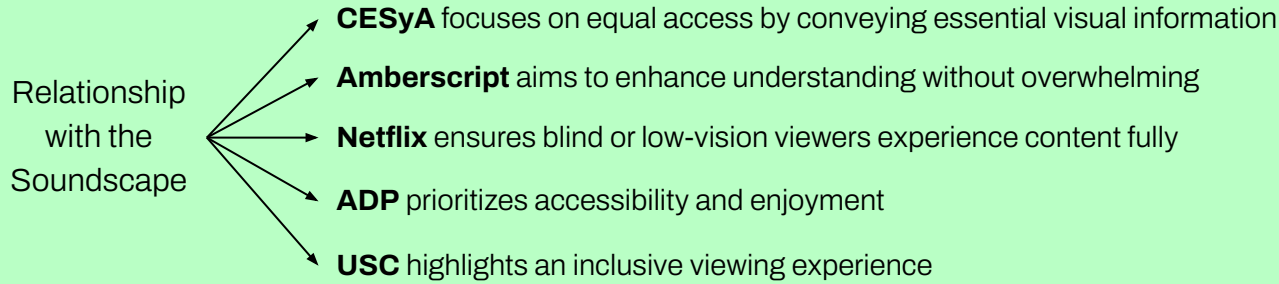
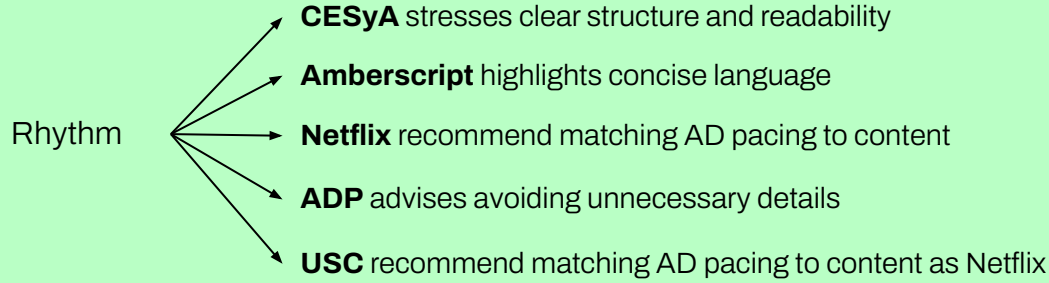


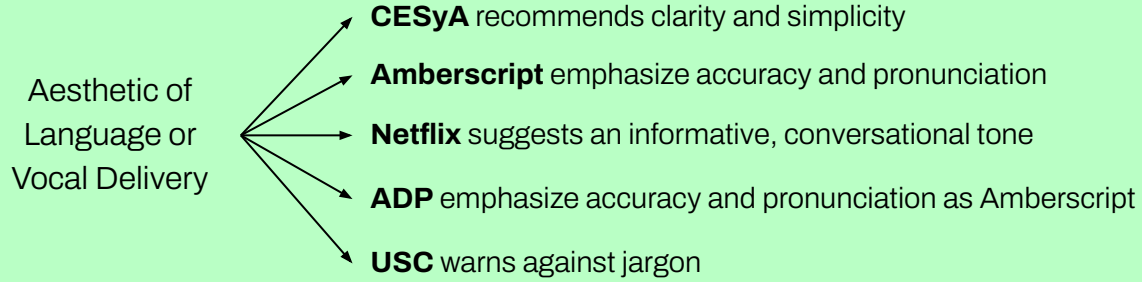


Analysis: Key Factors

6







Video

6



Purpose

6

- **Standard AD:** Understanding
- **Guided AD:** Understanding and enjoyment
- **Live AD:** Understanding and enjoyment
- **Audio Creation:** Experience

Type of Content Described

6

- **Standard AD:** All content described
- **Guided AD:** Relevant character details
- **Live AD:** Relevant character details, but no details about the edition
- **Audio Creation:** Some movements

Rhythm

6

- **Standard AD:** Disconnected from the piece. Hectic
- **Guided AD:** Less disconnected. It follows the evolution of the piece.
- **Live AD:** Matching with Piece
- **Audio Creation:** Matching with Piece

Relation with Soundscape

6

- **Standard AD:** Soundscape can't be heard clearly
- **Guided AD:** Uses natural pauses and it is partially synchronized
- **Live AD:** Uses natural pauses and it is totally synchronized
- **Audio Creation:** Uses natural pauses and it is totally synchronized

Perspective

6

- **Standard AD:** External (3rd person)
- **Guided AD:** Questions the audience: “Who is she?”
- **Live AD:** External (3rd person)
- **Audio Creation:** Character and actors’ perspective (1st person)

Aesthetics of Language or Vocal Delivery

6

- **Standard AD:** Neutral
- **Guided AD:** Neutral
- **Live AD:** Neutral
- **Audio Creation:** In character

Metaphorical Connections

6

- **Standard AD:** Only when the level of abstraction is excessive
- **Guided AD:** It also increases when abstraction does. It includes formal metaphors.
- **Live AD:** Only when the level of abstraction is excessive
- **Audio Creation:** It constantly produces metaphorical relations from the image.

Focus Groups

The actresses described the process of creating soundscapes from images as both challenging and liberating; one found it easier to work with her own image, feeling inspired and spontaneous, while struggling to invent a story for the other, while another actress reflected on how not seeing her co-actor allowed for a more genuine performance, feeling the absence influenced her interpretation of the scene.

Conclusions

Food for Thought

7

What is the purpose of the final outcome? Is it to have an artistic experience or is it to have the content of what can be visualized?

Audio Creation involves a methodology that is dialectically opposed to universal design and its aesthetics. Can we speak of a universal methodology?

We have noticed some descriptive content in the Audio Creation. This contributes to the idea that description and creation, as they have been stated, involve a dialectical tension.

How can we discuss accessibility when the experience itself is subjective, with each person having a different perception, as Barthes or Rancière suggested, and does this perspective lead us toward universal design or a different product altogether?

Questions?

References

- Candlin, F. (2003). 'Blindness, Art and Exclusion in Museums and Galleries.' *International Journal of Art and Design* 22: 100–110.
- Candlin, F. (2006). 'The Dubious Inheritance of Touch: Art History and Museum Access.' *Journal of Visual Culture* 5 (2): 137–154.
- Classen, C., ed. (2005). *The Book of Touch*. Berg.
- Burch, N. (1979) *To the distant observer*. University of California Press.
- Cook, M. (2019) *Sing Them Again: Audience Singing in Silent Film* in Barton, R.; Trezise (Eds.) *Music and Sound in Silent Film*. Routledge.
- Dym, J. A. (2000) *Benshi and the Introduction of Motion Pictures to Japan*. Monumenta Nipponica. Vol, 55, No. 4 (Winter, 2000).
- Fryer, L. 2017. 'Audio Description: Art or Access?' In *Ways of Seeing Art: Exploring the Links between Art and Audio Description*, 8–14. Shape Arts.
- Snyder, Joel (2007). Audio description: The visual made verbal. *International Journal of the Arts in Society* (2), 99-104.
- Udo, J.P., and D.I. Fels. 2010. 'The Rogue Poster-Children of Universal Design: Closed Captioning and Audio Description.' *Journal of Engineering Design* 21 (2–3): 207–221.