DARCI Conference 2025: Programme Abstract Booklet

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Day 1: Thursday 11th September

Keynote: The Sensational Museum: Disability Gain and the Journey from Access to Inclusion

Hannah Thompson

The Sensational Museum is a 27-month AHRC-funded research project which runs between April 2023 and July 2025. Underpinned by specialisms in design, digital heritage, disability studies, psychology, public history, and professional experience in the heritage sector, TSM rejects the 'look and learn' approach that has influenced both how museums construct and store collections information and how this information is communicated to audiences.

In this plenary, project PI Professor Hannah Thompson will present the project's key findings and argue that the project's focus on 'Disability Gain' and the resulting progression from 'access' to 'inclusion' can offer a blueprint for the cultural sector more widely. The project is grounded in action research and co-creation with industry professionals. We worked with a range of museums across the UK, to create environments where no one sense is necessary or sufficient for a fulfilling museum experience. Rather than providing additional accommodations for workers' and visitors' specific needs, we explore how institutions might embed inclusive designs and content into everything they do, meaning that every museum visitor and professional can trust that the museum will be accessible to them.

This sector-transforming multisensory challenge raises a critical question – how do we unpick millennia of ocularcentric bias whilst still maintaining visitor and practitioner trust? Our solution builds on the theory of 'Disability Gain', recognizing that disabled living, and adaptations developed for and by disabled people, can enhance the experiences of everyone. TSM aims to put disability at the centre of all aspects of practice – from collections management and curation to exhibition design and education – and use what we know about disability to change how everyone engages in a museum. Thompson will present the theoretical underpinnings behind the Sensational Museum project, before exploring some of the project's outputs and discussing the impact on TSM lessons learnt for the cultural sector more broadly.

Bio: Professor Hannah Thompson (Royal Holloway, University of London) is a partially blind academic and activist. Her research focuses on the intersections between Critical Disability Studies and French Studies and she has published 3 monographs and numerous papers on

nineteenth-century French literature. Hannah is currently working on creative audio description in museums, art galleries and theatres and her notion of 'blindness gain'. She was Production Consultant for the Donmar Warehouse's installation BLINDNESS in 2020 and worked with a range of theatres and audio describers during her AHRC 2021-2 EDI Fellowship 'Inclusive Description for Equality and Access'. In April 2023 she became PI on a £1M AHRC-funded grant The Sensational Museum which aims to 'use what we know about disability to change how museums work for everyone.' Hannah writes about her place as a partially blind academic in a resolutely sighted world in her blog Blind Spot.

Paper Session 1A: Sign Languages and Captioning in the Creative Industries

Rethinking Deafness, Film and Accessibility

Kirsty Liddiard (University of Sheffield), Dr Ryan Bramley (University of Sheffield)

Suspense is key to any form of successful storytelling. In film, suspense is deployed in an often audiocentric manner. However, in a medium that relies heavily on audio techniques to enact suspense, are d/Deaf audiences being marginalised? Working with Paper, a Sheffield-based user research and service design company, we interviewed a small group of Deaf people to explore how the quality of accessibility features, like captioning and subtitling, impacts their experiences of suspense across a range of film genres. We acknowledged that we were a research team composed of hearing people, with no embodied experiences of Deafness and/or audism. Therefore, to effectively embed Deaf- centric approaches and Deaf people's lived knowledges at the core of the project, our Advisory Group, made up of Deaf people, actively guided the project, its themes and approaches, and provided expert knowledge across the process to ensure inclusivity for Deaf participants and their communities. We recruited 8 Deaf participants through paid online and social media advertising with British Deaf News, a well-known online news portal for the Deaf community run by the British Deaf Association charity. Whilst being careful not to generalise the lived and embodied experiences of a relatively small group of people across the Deaf community as a whole, our interviews revealed the importance of cinematic suspense for our participants, and their feelings of frustration when they experience poor captions (or in some cases, no captions at all) and myriad other forms of inaccessibility. For example, we found that certain key information was not clearly translated in the captions, and participants told us that they were unaware of what the descriptions of sound were trying to convey. Complex language made it difficult for participants to feel connected to the film and understand the music. In short, good quality captioning was vital for participants to feel suspense and to get the full experience of a film. In this talk, we will summarise our key findings from the Rethinking Deafness, Film and Accessibility project, as well as drawing on D/deaf Studies and Critical Disability Studies to reimagine what a more inclusive cinematic experience might look like. These ideas are articulated in two new films, 'Animating Inclusion' and 'Rethinking Subtitles for Deaf Audiences', both of which argue that co-design is needed between filmmakers, captioners and Deaf consultants throughout the film production in order to bring about a more accessible cinematic experience for Deaf audiences.

Bios:

Kirsty Liddiard is currently a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Education at the University of Sheffield. She is the author of The Intimate Lives of Disabled People (2018, Routledge) and the co-editor of The Palgrave Handbook of Disabled Children's Childhood Studies (2018, Palgrave) with Tillie Curran and Katherine Runswick-Cole. She is also co-editor of Being Human in Covid-19 (in press, Bristol University Press) with Warren Pearce, Paul Martin and Stevie de Saille. She tweets at @kirstyliddiard1.

Dr Bramley is a lecturer, filmmaker, and arts-based researcher currently based at The University of Sheffield's School of Education. His work primarily explores how minoritised groups are represented in film, TV, media, education, and beyond.

Signing Culture: Using Museum Collections to Expand and Promote British Sign Language

Fiona Slater (Science Museum Group), Dr Audrey Cameron OBE (University of Edinburgh)

This paper will share the process and findings from a recent pilot project between academics at Royal Holloway University London, the Science Musuem Group and deaf researcher linked to the Scottish Sensory Centres' BSL Glossary Project. In late 2023, the National Collections Centre at the Science and Innovation Park in Wiltshire welcomed a team of British Sign Language (BSL) experts to delve into the Science Museum Group's collection of scientific objects. The objects and discussions with researchers and academics, were used to inspire the creation of several new science specific BSL signs. The absence of a broad enough sign language vocabulary has previously left deaf people struggling to enter scientific conversations, either as students or educators. Finger-spelling – the method by which signers communicate words for which there is no specific sign – is slow and can be imprecise, particularly when dealing with long scientific terms. Dr Cameron leads a long-running glossary project at the Scottish Sensory Centre which aims to address this deficiency by creating and codifying numerous new signs, focused on STEM subjects. The Royal Holloway scientists described the origins and applications of several objects from the collection before being questioned by the sign language experts on the terminology they used. The sign language experts highlighting words that may need translating into BSL. Together, the participants then developed potential signs, ensuring both clarity and specificity for the new signs, while remaining faithful to the science behind the terms. This collaboration is just one illustration of how museum collections can inspire unique research projects.

Bios:

Fiona joined the Science Museum Group in April 2021, in the newly developed role of Head of Access and Equity, to oversee the Groups public commitment and core value of being 'Open for All'. For over 15 years Fiona has worked within Museum and third sector organisations to champion inclusive and accessible practice and is passionate about the creative potential of a more diverse cultural sector. Between 2011 – 2018 she played a

central role in the development of 'Unlimited', a ground-breaking commissioning programme for disabled artists, working in partnership with cultural venues across the UK and internationally.

Dr Audrey Cameron embarked on her academic journey at Paisley College of Technology (now the University of West of Scotland), earning a BSc Hons in Chemistry. Her passion for the field led a PhD in polymer chemistry at Strathclyde University. Afterwards, She expanded her horizons through postdoctoral research experiences at Strathclyde and Durham Universities. From 2013 to 2015, Audrey had the privilege of serving as a Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, contributing to the NSPCC Child Protection Research Centre housed within the School of Education. From 2017-2021, she worked with Professor Napier on two Eramus+ research projects at Heriot-Watt University - deaf employment and gender-based violence. She holds the position of Chancellor's Fellow, where her focus lies at the intersection of science education and British Sign Language research and as a Chemistry tutor on the PGDE Secondary Education (Chemistry/ General Science) course.

Unlocking audiovisual media for all: How AI-generated subtitles enhance audience engagement and emotional connection - results of the pilot study

Grzegorz Kata (WSEI University), Monika Zabrocka (Jagiellonian University), Wiesław Poleszak (WSEI University)

In the era where inclusivity is paramount, this talk presents a groundbreaking exploration of emotionally tuned subtitles designed for both hearing and d/Deaf and hard of hearing audiences. The insights shared will be grounded in a preliminary study conducted in Poland during the autumn and winter of 2024/2025, which utilized AI technology to create subtitles that capture the emotional essence of movie scenes. The AI automatically adapts the subtitles' font and style to reflect the emotions and action presented on the screen. This research highlights how these AI-generated subtitles can enrich emotional engagement and narrative depth, demonstrating their potential to enhance the viewing experience for diverse audiences. The study examined psychophysiological and cognitive indicators to assess how these innovative subtitles can effectively replace traditional text, making audio(visual) content not only accessible but also emotionally resonant. The tools used included eye tracking as a measure of cognitive and attentional engagement, GSR and facial analysis as indicators of emotional response, and a questionnaire to assess plot comprehension. We investigated the impact of emotionality and creative text form on the film's appeal and comprehension across four distinct viewer groups. Ultimately, this presentation aims to showcase the transformative potential of emotionally tuned subtitles in the realm of media accessibility.

Bios:

Grzegorz Kata (PhD) is a psychologist, assistant professor at the Laboratory of Psychoprophylaxis and Psychological Assistance at the WSEI University, Lublin, Poland. His academy interests cover the field of new technologies use in enhancing the education of youth and adults, youth problem behavior and supporting. Author and co-author of psychometric tools for measuring youth mental crisis, children and youth emotional-social competence, and the quality of peer relationships.

Monika Zabrocka (PhD), is currently associated with the Jagiellonian University where she works as an assistant professor at the Chair for Translation Studies (Faculty of Philology). She conducts researches focused on creative techniques of audio description dedicated to young viewers. In her academic work, Monika deals mainly with audiovisual translation, accessibility, and inclusion tools.

Wiesław Poleszak (PhD), is a psychologist, an assistant professor at the WSEI University in Lublin; lecturer and trainer in postgraduate studies in psychoprevention and addiction prevention. Psychotherapist specializing in work with children and adolescents. Academically focuses on the prevention of problematic behaviors, education, support, and development of children and youth.

Using AI-based tools to monitor subtitle quality

Michael Armstrong (Associate Staff, University of Dundee), Dr Michael Crabb (Head of Computing at the University of Dundee)

The RNID's 2023 report, "Subtitle It," highlights the significant challenges viewers face in accessing subtitles through on-demand platforms. While the Media Act 2024 mandates minimum quotas for subtitle provision on "tier 1" services, subtitle quality remains an issue which impacts accessibility and viewer experience. While AI-based speech-to-text tools cannot provide broadcast-quality subtitles, because they produce different types of errors, they can be used to monitor some of the problems which affect the quality of television subtitles and degrade the audience experience. This presentation will demonstrate how, using a modified version of Whisper, OpenAI's speech-to-text engine combined with natural language processing and a simple statistical approach, we can usefully quantify problems with timing and word omission in subtitles in broadcast and on-demand content. We will show how these problems vary across different types of TV programming, including archive programmes with original subtitles that omit a substantial portion of the spoken words and live programmes, where subtitlers re-speak the dialogue or manually cue pre-prepared blocks, leading to subtitles that (usually) lag the speech along with the omission and reordering of words. These problems will be illustrated with examples from broadcast television and on-demand content, including technical faults and workflow issues. The examples will also highlight the challenges of aligning subtitles with a speech-to-text transcript, given that this work has revealed examples of subtitles omitting around 40% of the spoken words and subtitles arriving between 20 seconds early and 50 seconds late as well as an example of a programme broadcast with the subtitles for a different episode. We will conclude with some observations on current practices and historical trends in TV

subtitling and discuss the need for improved quality control and monitoring of subtitles provided for broadcast and on-demand programmes.

Bios:

Michael Armstrong is a media technology researcher and developer with 25 years of experience working at BBC R&D covering topics such as accessibility, audio-video quality and perception and the role of the audience in media. They have had a considerable impact on the UK's media landscape, from the launch of Freeview to significant improvements in TV subtitle quality and is the originator of the concept of object-based media. Prior to working in R&D, Michael spent many years in BBC local radio as an engineer culminating in the installation and running of the BBC's first computer-based playout system at Radio Bristol. Michael left BBC R&D in March 2024 and is now associate staff at the University of Dundee working on ways to monitor subtitle quality. As a regular user of television subtitles they have first-hand experience of the ongoing shortcomings of subtitles.

Dr Michael Crabb is the Head of Computing at the University of Dundee. His research focuses on Human-Computer Interaction and User Experience, particularly exploring how subtitles can be used as a data source to create new media experiences and innovative ways for people to interact with media content. He has secured significant funding, collaborating with organisations such as BBC, ITV, and NCR. Michael's work aims to improve digital accessibility and user-centred design, focusing on making media more inclusive and adaptable. His research is published in leading venues like CHI, advancing academic and practical approaches to HCI and UX.

Making voices heard: Using lived experience to shape product R&D

Dr Lauren Ward (RNID), Dr Matt Benatan (Sonos), Dr Alastair Moore (RNID), Dr Chris Pike (Sonos)

Abstract: When designing accessible media technology, the sooner lived experience can be factored into the design process, the better. But what does this look like in practice when the product is always being tweaked, there are tight company deadlines and engineers and end-users don't always speak the same language? Through 2024 the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) and Sonos, a leading consumer audio company, took on the challenge of fully aligning user needs and feature design. They worked together on a new Speech Enhancement feature for their Arc Ultra soundbar, integrating lived experience of people with different experiences of hearing right from the internal prototype through beta, to feature launch in May 2025. This collaboration was crucial in shaping the feature and its implementation. The work comprised workshops, online and in-person collaboration sessions, and having 37 people with various types of hearing loss attend the company's labs in-person. This presentation will explore some of our key learnings from this project, illustrated and evidenced through the thematic analysis of the second-round participant transcripts (n=18). These include:

- Finding a common language between engineers and end-users

- Balancing lead-time for organising public involvement with a product that's in active development.
- The value of super-users, with lived experience and domain knowledge

The presentation will conclude with an exploration of the value of this involvement, not only to the final quality of products but the value to individuals of being 'a part of making some a bit different, something a bit better.

Bios:

Dr Lauren Ward is a Technology Lead at RNID. She leads consultancy work with major technology companies, collaborating with them to make accessible and user-centred products and services. Lauren is also part of the Digital Television Group's Accessibility Working Group and works with RNID's policy team to champion media accessibility. Prior to RNID, Lauren was at the University of York as an XR Stories Research Fellow working on accessible mixed reality media projects. Lauren has also worked for the Audio Team at BBC R&D, where her collaboration with BBC Studios' Casualty received 'Runner Up' at the European Broadcast Union's Technology and Innovation Awards 2020. Lauren has a PhD from the University of Salford in accessible broadcast technology and an Honour's Degree in Engineering and B. Phil (University of Tasmania). Outside of her work Lauren bakes, enjoys table-top gaming and goes rambling with her daughter.

Matt Benatan is a Principal Research Scientist at Sonos, where he leads research into machine learning and advanced digital signal processing. He has previously worked as a machine learning researcher at IBM and Midas (MusicTribe), holds a PhD in Audio-Visual Speech Processing from the University of Leeds, and has authored the books 'Deep Learning for Physical Scientists' and 'Enhancing Deep Learning with Bayesian Inference'.

Dr Alastair Moore is a Technology Lead at RNID. Alastair leads the charity's strategy on Auracast and assistive listening systems, as well as collaborating with major technology companies on making accessible and user-centred products and services. Before RNID, Alastair was a postdoctoral researcher at Imperial College London, most recently as a Research Fellow working on Acoustic Signal Processing for Augmented Reality. Alastair has also previously worked for Pure as a Hardware Design Engineer. He has a PhD in Binaural Sound and M. Eng in Electrical Engineering with Music Technology, both from the University of York.

Chris Pike is a Principal Research Scientist at Sonos. His work focuses on audio signal processing and sound experience design, particularly in the field of spatial audio. He has a PhD from the Audio Lab at the University of York and previously worked at BBC Research & Development.

Paper Session 1B: Disability Representation in Arts and Media Critical engagement with representations of disability and intimacy on Instagram

Critical engagement with representations of disability and intimacy on Instagram

Bev Enion (The University of Sheffield)

Digitization can create a divide for disabled people, but social media, particularly Instagram, can facilitate their participation in public debates, form communities, and shape narratives around disability and intimacy, a routinely overlooked intersectionality (Ellis & Kent, 2010; Haller, 2010). Discussions around disability and intimacy have often been confined to the private sphere, limiting public discourse and suppressing the sexual rights of disabled women, in particular. However, given Instagram's focus on user-generated content, it uniquely enables disabled women to shift discussion into the public sphere and facilitates the expression of their sexuality and intimate identities in ways not possible elsewhere (Todd, 2018). According to Gelfgren, Ineland, and Cocq (2021), Instagram affects both personal experiences and broader political processes, allowing disabled women to seek validation and connection through community interaction (Miller, 2017). Resultantly, disabled women have repurposed Instagram as tool for socio-political activism concerning their intimate rights and identities. This social movement is particularly pertinent when aligned with the lack of affirmative media representations around disability women's intimate identities. Historically portrayed as asexual, vulnerable, or deviant, I argue that disabled women are now using Instagram to challenge these stereotypes and user-generated photographs allow them to engage in activism, self-expression, and education. As such, this paper will present a qualitative exploration of how women with physical impairments more specifically, critically engage with representations of disability and intimacy on Instagram. Using a participatory arts-informed methodology, the study involves focus groups and semi-structured interviews to gather insights into how women with physical impairments are depicted in user-generated photographs and how other women with physical impairments engage with these representations. Preliminary findings will be available for discussion during the presentation.

Bio: I am an ESRC 1+3 funded doctoral researcher within the School of Education where my research takes an interdisciplinary approach to consider disability, sexuality, and the media. More specifically, it looks at how photographic representations of disability and intimacy are represented on social media and interpreted by women with physical impairments. I value co-production and creative methods and centre them in my approach to research.

Borders, Bodies, and Metaphors: Exploring Post-colonial Representations of Disability in Pakistan and India

Khansa Maria (University of Oxford/Georgetown University)

This paper explores the intersection of disability representation in South Asian literature and the broader disability rights movement, with a focus on post-colonial theory. Initially aimed at analysing a wide range of novels from across South Asia, the project narrows its focus to three key texts from India and Pakistan: Cracking India by Bapsi Sidhwa, Shame by Salman Rushdie, and Clear Light of Day by Anita Desai. Through these novels, the paper examines how disabled characters are often portrayed as silent, symbolic figures, reflecting the fractured state of post-colonial nations. Rather than giving disabled individuals a voice, these characters are frequently used as narrative devices that perpetuate stereotypes, linking disability to societal shame, capitalist ideals, and border conflicts.The paper argues that this literary portrayal mirrors the ongoing marginalization of disabled people in South Asia, where their identities are medicalized, and their voices are suppressed both in literature and in reality. Drawing on disability studies and post-colonial theory, the paper critiques the failure of these representations to engage with the lived experiences of disabled individuals. The analysis also highlights how social media and new forms of digital expression are gradually providing a platform for disabled people to reclaim their voices and challenge entrenched stereotypes. This paper calls for a re-examination of both literary and societal representations of disability in South Asia, emphasising the need for more inclusive and authentic portrayals that reflect the complex realities of disabled individuals.

Bio: Khansa Maria. Khansa is a disability rights activist, researcher, and independent consultant with a professional background in Culture, Politics, International Development, and Inclusive Education. Over the past few years, Khansa has collaborated with both international and local organizations to develop strategies for fostering inclusion and addressing various Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) issues. Khansa is also Rhodes Scholar having been elected to the scholarship in 2021. She is currently pursuing her DPhil after having pursued her MPhil from the University of Oxford at the Department of international development.

Dignity of Risk Everything: Navigating Threats to Life in Teen Sick-Flicks

Tabby Holland (University of York)

This presentation explores the concept of "Dignity of Risk Everything," an extension of the principle of "Dignity of Risk," which advocates for the autonomy of individuals, primarily those with disabilities, to make life choices, even when those choices carry significant risks. Building on this established concept, "Dignity of Risk Everything" addresses situations where the stakes are life-threatening, demanding a deeper examination of the balance between personal autonomy and potential consequences. Drawing inspiration from the tagline "Risk Everything...For Love" in the film Everything, Everything (Meghie, 2017) this framework analyses how ill and disabled teenage girls navigate the desire for personal fulfilment and agency in the face of extreme risks. Additionally, it considers how society's perceptions of these high-stakes decisions can either affirm or undermine the dignity and autonomy of the characters involved. By focusing on Teen Sick-Flicks, this presentation investigates how these narratives represent the tensions between risk, love, and life, and the broader societal implications for autonomy and dignity in life-and-death scenarios. It also raises questions

around the extent to which disabled people have been involved in shaping these narratives, whether through consultation, authorship, or performance, and how their inclusion (or absence) influences the representation of risk and agency. As part of an evolving chapter from my PhD thesis Sick Flicks and Dying Chicks, this work reflects on the potential for more inclusive and creatively generative storytelling practices that centre disabled perspectives in the depiction of high-stakes decision-making.

Bio: Passionate about equality and social justice, Tabby Holland is a PhD student at the University of York working on their thesis 'Sick Flicks and Dying Chicks'. Tabby holds a MA in Theatre where they examined the construction of intersectionality between disability and mental health in low socio-economic settings through creative practice, and a BSc (Hons) in Film and Television Production. Their work has been awarded and showcased at The Love York Awards, York Humanities Research Centre, Screentest, LUMA Film Festival, Festival of Ideas, and the Edinburgh Fringe.

Engaging the Arts for Disability Inclusion in African Contexts

Charlotte Baker (School of Global Affairs, Lancaster University)

People with disabilities face challenges of accessibility that include infrastructural, cultural and attitudinal barriers in many sub-Saharan African places. These barriers limit access to education, employment, healthcare, and inclusion in community life. Our paper will present some of the work undertaken as part of AHRC-funded Disability Inclusion Africa project (2020-2024). The Disability Inclusion Africa project focused on the impact of various understandings of disability for people with disabilities, their families and communities in Cameroon, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda. The project was led by Professor Charlotte Baker (Lancaster University, UK), Professor Elvis Imafidon (SOAS, University of London, UK and Ambrose Alli University, Nigeria), Dr Emelda Ngufor Samba (University of Yaoundé 1, Cameroon) and Professor Kobus Moolman (University of the Western Cape, South Africa), several of whom are people with disabilities. The research team worked in partnership with disabled persons' organizations in each context. Understandings of disability are often rooted in misconceptions, stereotypes, traditional, religious and superstitious beliefs. We will explain how we engaged the arts, including applied theatre, creative writing and photography, to bring together people with disabilities and other stakeholders including education professionals, healthcare practitioners and policy makers to highlight the impact of these beliefs on people with disabilities and to explore ways to bring about change. Our paper presents our project findings to demonstrate the power of the arts to engage diverse stakeholders, to overcome barriers to access, and to promote disability inclusion in African contexts.

Bio: Charlotte Baker is Professor of French and Critical Disability Studies in the School of Global Affairs (Languages and Cultures) at Lancaster University. Charlotte's research focuses on disability and stigma in sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular interest in the genetic condition albinism. She has published widely on the socio-cultural realities of living with albinism, cultural representations of albinism, and human rights abuses against people

with albinism. Charlotte currently leads the AHRC-funded Disability Inclusion Africa Network, she is Co-Director of The International Network Against Accusations of Witchcraft and Associated Harmful Practices, and a member of the UK National Working Group on Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief. From 2015-2021, she collaborated with the former Independent Expert on the Rights of Persons with Albinism, and Gary Foxcroft of the Witchcraft and Human Rights Information Network to lead work to secure UN Resolution 47/8 on the Elimination of Harmful Practices Related to Accusations of Witchcraft and Ritual Attacks in July 2021.

Panel 1: The Role of the Access Coordinator in the Creative Industries

Pablo Romero-Fresco (Universidade de Vigo, University of Roehampton), Ana Tamayo (Universidad del País Vasco, UPV/EHU), Rosa Alonso-Perez (Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, UK), David Padmore (Accessibility for ITV), Jess Mabel Jones (HETV), Cathy Taylor (Ofcom), Clare Baines (British Film Industry)

In recent years, several campaigns for increasing participation, representation and inclusion of deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent (DDN) talent in the film and TV industries have been launched around the world. A case in point is the TV Access Project, an alliance of ten of the biggest broadcasters and streamers in the UK, which seeks full inclusion of DDN people by 2030. The project has produced a set of basic guidelines, specifically aimed at production, which any organisation can adopt and decide how to implement. A further initiative is Ofcom's new access services code, which proposes providers and content makers to consider accessibility issues early on in the creative process (Ofcom, 2024). This proposal encourages content production teams and media accessibility experts to work together, a principle shared with the theoretical framework of accessible filmmaking in media accessibility research studies. Accessible filmmaking establishes that media access, traditionally seen as an afterthought, should be integrated into early production, fostering collaboration between creators and media accessibility experts and potentially enhancing user experience (Romero-Fresco, 2019). The need for increasing participation, representation and inclusion of DDN people, and for reaching a wider audience, has brought about new professional roles, such as the access coordinator and the media access coordinator. Access coordinators ensure that access and adjustments are provided for any member of the cast and crew who may need them (Underlying Health Condition, 2021). Media access coordinators, whose role is still emerging in the industry, work with filmmakers to consider how the accessible versions of their films (subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, audio description and sign language translation and interpreting) are received by different groups of users. This panel brings together professionals, policy makers and researchers to engage in conversation and provide a clearer overview of how (media) access coordinators can increase and improve participation, representation and accessibility in the media industry.

References:
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- Romero-Fresco, P. (2019). Accessible filmmaking: Integrating translation and accessibility into the filmmaking process. London, England; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Underlying Health Condition (2021) Everybody Forgot About the Toilets.

Bios:

Pablo Romero Fresco is a Professor at Universidade de Vigo (Spain) and Honorary Professor at the University of Roehampton (UK). He is the author of the books Subtitling through Speech Recognition (Routledge) and Accessible Filmmaking (Routledge). He leads the international research group GALMA and has worked as a consultant for the European Parliament, Ofcom, Netflix or the Spanish Film Academy, with which he has set up a training course to introduce accessible filmmaking and (media) access coordination in the Spanish film industry. Pablo is also a filmmaker. His first short documentary, Joining the Dots (2012), was used by film schools, universities and film festivals to raise awareness about audio description. His first feature-length documentary, Where Memory Ends (2022), premiered at the London Spanish Film Festival. In 2024 he was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the international subtitlers' association SUBTLE for his lifelong impact on the areas of audiovisual translation and media accessibility around the world.

Ana Tamayo is an Associate Professor at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). Currently, she is a member of the research groups TRALIMA/ITZULIK (GIU21/060, UPV/EHU) and collaborates with TRAMA (Universitat Jaume I) and GALMA (Universidade de Vigo). Her research interests focus on audiovisual translation and accessibility in different modalities. She is especially interested in contributing to the research on media accessibility and minoritized languages, mostly Basque and Sign Language(s).

Rosa Alonso Perez is a Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University (UK). She has ample experience teaching foreign languages in higher education. She won a Pedagogic Innovation Fund for an interdisciplinary project on didactic interlingual subtitling that culminated in the Spanish Short Film Festival, a student event organised in collaboration with film directors and well-attended by an international audience. Rosa has also participated in several projects on didactic audiovisual translation led by TRADIT (UNED, Spain). Recently, Rosa has trained as an access coordinator with GALMA (Universidade de Vigo) in collaboration with the Spanish Film Academy, which has driven her to expand her research interests to accessibility and accessible filmmaking.

David has spent over 30 years working in television accessibility. He started as a subtitler for the BBC, and was part of the team that delivered huge growth in subtitling for the expansion of digital television and the early BBC iPlayer. He then led Red Bee Media's access services division for many years, delivering subtitling, audio description and sign language services to many of the world's major broadcasters. He is now the Director of Accessibility for ITV, where he has responsibility for the subtitling and audio description on ITV's broadcast and streaming services. He also leads the team that seeks to improve the digital accessibility and inclusive design of ITV's technology, both for customers and colleagues.

Jess is an Access Coordinator and Creative Coach for HETV, winning awards for inclusive practice from RTS and Scope. She is a contributor to TAP and, as part of Brazen Productions, is one of the delivery partners for ScreenSkills' Access Coordinator training. As a translator, Jess is creating Easy Read versions of ScreenSkills' catalogue of modules, which will publish in early 2025. For over a decade, Jess has worked in inclusive settings as an award-winning theatremaker, writer, performer, director and producer. Her work is joyful, disruptive and eclectic and has taken place in theatres, in communities, on screen, in cabaret bars, on the street and at festivals, all over the world. Jess is AuDHD.

Cathy is a Principal in Ofcom's Content Policy Team, with a particular focus on the accessibility of television and on-demand services to disabled people, and the diversity of the broadcasting industry behind the scenes. She has previously worked in factual television and for bodies including the British Board of Film Classification.

Clare Baines's bio TBA.

Paper Session 1C: Sonic Dimensions of Accessibility

Translating background music in films: Where is the place for Audio Description?

Paula Igareda (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Over the past century, film has evolved significantly thanks to technological advancements in recording and projection. Innovations such as sound, color, surround sound, Dolby, 3D, and now digital formats have transformed cinema into a complex multisemiotic experience. Music has long played an integral role in films, even predating the advent of synchronized sound. Yet, within Media Accessibility Studies, background music often occupies a secondary position in relation to audio description (AD). Typically, blind and visually impaired audiences cannot fully appreciate this musical layer, even when it conveys emotion or atmosphere, as AD often fails to acknowledge or preserve the director's intended effect. This paper explores how AD can better account for background music and its emotional and narrative roles. It is structured in two parts. First, a corpus analysis of audio described films is presented, examining how background music, silence, and leitmotifs are treated. Second, a reception study involving sighted university students is discussed. Participants listened to selected musical excerpts from well-known films and series to assess whether they could recognize and recall these pieces — exploring the existence of musical memory and its potential role in enhancing accessibility.

Bio: Paula Igareda holds a BA in German Philology (Universidad de Salamanca) and a PhD in Audiovisual Translation (Universitat Pompeu Fabra). She is a lecturer at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, member of the research group GEDIT (Discourse and Translation Studies Research Group), has been a professional translator since 2005 and has participated in many European projects relating to equal opportunities and the integration of people at risk of exclusion. Her research interests are Audiovisual Translation, Media Accessibility and Comic Translation.

Silencing Audio Description: Using modern techniques to make silent films accessible

Polly Ellen Goodwin (PolySensoryAccess)

Silent film as a medium involves the projection of filmed moving images onto a screen to the accompaniment of music. Experiencing a silent film has its own particularity. You are enveloped by the experience, engaging the brain in piecing the visual clues together and being drawn in and along by the music. For many, the inclusion – some might say intrusion – of the voice jars horribly. So how can audio description work in the context of making silent films accessible to people who are blind or have low vision? In 2015, I tried to tackle this challenge in a paper delivered at the Blind Creations conference at Royal Holloway University in London. The proposed solution was dependent on a development in technology that would allow the synchronous delivery of description at an individual user level in either refreshable braille or an accessible text format. Fast forward 10 years and the technology has arrived. Using a technological process initially created for use in opera, this paper shares the findings of a project into the development of an approach to describing images that bypasses the voice to create an accessible and authentic experience of silent film. Utilising different ways of consuming descriptions through a user's preferred technology, this project involved consumers throughout the process to shape a new avenue and role for audio describers, culminating in an accessible exhibition of a silent film at the HippFest silent film festival in Scotland. The paper exposes the challenges encountered, and pivots and solutions discovered during the development process, and demonstrates the outcomes, including the use of introductions (similar to the Audio Introductions used most prominently in accessible theatre productions) to give consumers the richest possible experience of the unique medium of silent film.

Bio: Polly's career has been devoted to widening access for people who are blind or have low vision. As a trained and practising audio describer, with nearly 15 years of experience, she creates audio description tracks for broadcast television, cinema, streaming platforms, live presentations, and galleries. She runs the Australian chapter of an initiative, aimed at encouraging young consumers to engage with audio description, has created an accredited unit on using AD aimed at young people and is a member of the Audio Description advisory Board run by Curtin University's Centre for Culture and Technology. As a researcher, she focuses on the potential and challenges of new and alternative applications of audio description, including as part of Dr Xiaochun Zhang's AD4Games project (which explores how audio description might enhance gameplay for players who are blind or have low vision). Current and previous research projects have explored the audio describing in the field of physical exercise, silent film and fashion, as well as the ethical position of the audio describer and their relation to the end user.

Sound as a Mediator of Visual Accessibility in Cinema: A Case Study of Low-Budget Brazilian Filmmaking

Marcos Antonio Fernandes Veloso (Federal University of Paraíba), Flávia Affonso Mayer

Most Brazilian film productions still do not incorporate accessibility as a fundamental part of their creative processes. This gap can create barriers that further hinder the full access of people with visual impairments to these works. This study seeks to investigate and propose

pathways that may contribute to changing this scenario, by analyzing the interventions of one of the researchers—who is part of the sound team and responsible for developing the sonic concept and editing. To this end, the study focuses on two low-budget Brazilian short films: Bom-Selvagem (2024) and Sangre (2024). The research aims to integrate accessibility into cinematic sound design through the lens of perception psychology and psychoacoustics, seeking to demonstrate in practice how theoretical elements can inform the creation of film sound. As methodological tools, the study employs an autoethnographic approach to the creative process of the sound editor and designer, and establishes a partnership between the sound department and the visual accessibility team—particularly through the involvement of a visually impaired consultant working directly with the sound designer in crafting the aesthetic of the film's sound. A narrative analysis will be conducted on the technical and aesthetic procedures adopted by this newly configured sound team, formed through the integration of visual accessibility and sound departments, with the aim of showing how collaboration with the director and other departments unfolded during the film's development. Based on this investigation and the discussions it fosters, the study aims to encourage reflection across other creative departments in film and audiovisual production, promoting necessary debates toward the development of a more inclusive Brazilian cinema. It emphasizes and advocates for accessibility as a mediating parameter in technical and creative decision-making in film productions from the Global South.

Bio: Marcos is a master's student in the Graduate Program in Communication at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGC-UFPB). Holds a bachelor's degree in Radio Broadcasting from the Federal University of Paraíba (2023). As a sound editor, direct sound technician, and sound designer, he works in the audiovisual and phonographic markets, serving as a sound director. CAPES scholarship holder in the project (PDPG - Capes Affirmative Policies), a research project aimed at understanding how Brazilian public universities implement accessibility policies to integrate their students. The project also aims to train teachers and students, always with the goal of promoting inclusion among all, following universal design and integrated accessibility practices. His research seeks to actively contribute to the development and implementation of innovative practices in the field of sound for cinema, with a special focus on accessibility, aiming for a more inclusive and diverse industry.

Flávia has a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais (PUC Minas, 2016), Brazil, with a doctoral research internship funded by Fulbright/CAPES at Case Western Reserve University (2014–2015, USA). Mayer completed three postdoctoral research projects: one in Communication at the Graduate Program in Communication at PUC Minas (2016–2017), and two in Linguistics, at the Graduate Program in Linguistics at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (2017–2018, 2018–2019), Brazil. She currently serves as the deputy coordinator of the Graduate Program in Communication at the Federal University of Paraíba, where she is also an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication. She coordinates the Language and Inclusion Observatory, the project Communicational and Strategic Processes on Disability in Brazilian Universities, and the project Accessibility in Audiovisual and Cinematic Productions: Analysis and Development of Protocols for Audio Description. Her research focuses on film, audiovisual media and accessibility, with an emphasis on film production, audio description, and semiotics.

Accessible music notation: where are we now?

Jay Pocknell (Music Support Officer, RNIB, Accessible Music Publishing initiative partner),
Daisy Higman (Music Support Officer, RNIB, Accessible Music Publishing initiative partner),
Sarah Morley Wilkins (Project Manager, DAISY Music Braille Project, Accessible Music
Publishing initiative partner)

Recent global collaborations in technology, standards, and best practice, led by the DAISY
Consortium and supported by RNIB, have unquestionably reversed the decline in accessible
music notation production and use. Musicians with print disabilities can now be increasingly
confident of the availability of scores in their required formats, which has historically
presented a huge barrier to equitable access. In this session, Jay will share an overview of
accessible formats for music, and how the MusicXML file format can be the key to unlocking
them. We will explore how print-disabled musicians can now independently create and
explore scores in mainstream music notation software, and then convert these into
accessible formats using new free tools. Jay will also share information about the Accessible
Music Publishing initiative and Action Group, which has allowed publishers to better
understand accessible music formats and begin engraving scores that are 'born accessible'.
We now need to ensure the wider sector is aware these developments. Join us in becoming
accessible music champions!

Bios:
Jay is a professional musician. He is also partially sighted, making him a prime contact for
matters relating to music and visual accessibility. He is one half of the Music Support Officer
role at RNIB - the Royal National Institute of Blind People - where he is tasked with
improving access to music-making for blind and partially sighted people, including
advocating for equitable access to music notation. Jay is the also the founder and Project
Manager of Sound Without Sight, a community-driven online hub that connects blind and
partially sighted musicians to each other, and to resources, opportunities, and support. Jay is
a graduate of the Music and Sound Recording (Tonmeister) course at the University of
Surrey and is credited on several top-10 releases including a UK Number 1 album. He has a
proven track record of working with emerging independent artists to help them obtain their
first radio plays.

Daisy is a freelance composer, voice teacher, singer, lecturer, and theatre-maker based in
the South West. With over 10 years' experience in facilitation, Daisy regularly runs music
and theatre workshops with a wide range of groups and specialises in accessible,
co-creative practice. Her work has taken her into schools, community centres, universities,
drama schools, colleges, theatres, daycentres, yoga studios - even aquariums. She has
worked with groups to create albums, demos, podcasts, gigs, installations and shows and
has run career development programs and skills building workshops for young musicians.
She also works part time as a Music Support Officer for RNIB. As a composer, Daisy has
written music for theatre, film, dance companies, vocal ensembles, community groups, and
choirs. She also arranges songs for her choirs and is particularly interested in collaborative
vocal improvisation.

Dr Sarah Morley Wilkins is Project Manager for the DAISY Music Braille Project. She is internationally recognised. Her work with DAISY involves researching sector needs and leading strategic interventions in a global collaboration on the future direction of technology and standards for the production and sharing of music braille.

Performance 1: Experiencing aphasia: where is my voice?

Jo Melvin (Professor of Fine Art and Feminisms, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL), Gertrude Gibbons (PhD Candidate, University of York)

We are proposing a performance, through film, exploring and communicating the experience of the language disorder aphasia.Having suffered a severe stroke in November 2023, Jo Melvin has been re-learning to speak, initially through use of music and painting. Stripped of the ability to speak or write, as well as being paralysed, Melvin could understand the world around but felt imprisoned by the inability to communicate as people await the expected forms of communication. In collaboration with her daughter Gertrude Gibbons, who is researching hybrid theatre forms, in which meaning is gathered not so much from words but through rhythm, music, gesture and visual effects, we want to raise awareness about the condition of aphasia. We are exploring ways of navigating the difficulties of the condition to facilitate inclusion, in the hope of allowing other people experiencing similar feelings of isolation to feel less misunderstood and marginalised. Through our film, where is my voice?, we consider how the condition can be used as part of a creative research and performance practice. In a short narrative voice over, part of the film will outline that there appears relatively little awareness of aphasia, but how it seems to be, directly or indirectly, the subject of various works of art, literature and music. The film refers to the work of several writers, composers and artists and will include a 2021 performance by Melvin of Barry Flanagan's poem 'O for orange U for you: poem for the lips' (1965). We explore this language disorder from the perspective of 'both sides'; the one who has the condition and the one who listens. The film will show this through examples of our communication and the (re)interpretation of verbal/grammatical 'mistakes'. It also includes sounds from our musical activities (voice, violin) and images we believe evoke the experience. We propose that the arts, in collaboration with science and technology, offer alternative modes of communication and expression, storytelling through alternative mediums, and how approaching the arts as a vehicle in this way can facilitate new approaches to accessibility and what accessibility means. The film will be approximately 10 minutes, with an allowance of up to 10 minutes for a Q&A after the screening.

Bios:

Jo Melvin is Professor in Fine Art and Feminisms at Chelsea College of Arts, UAL, London and Director and Curator of the Barry Flanagan Estate. She is a writer and exhibition maker, with an interdisciplinary research methodology giving attention to practices of women by using 'forgotten histories' (archives, memory, oral histories) as material for new curatorial research. Recent publications include 'Aesthetics of Silence', Picturing the Invisible, UCL (2022); Sophie Bouvier-Ausländer 'An Archaeology of the Future' Lausanne and London,

(2021), and 'Between the Eyes Painting. Gene Beery: Para-Visual Painter of Word Signs' Gene Beery, FriArt, Fribourg Switzerland (2019). Recent projects include The Feuilleton I will bear witness: Piggy-backing from the Edicola, Spoleto, Umbria and MACRO, Roma, Italy 2021, 'Imagine Being Here Now' with Lucy R. Lippard and Askeaton Contemporary, (2021), Barry Flanagan Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2019) and Publication Scaffold, Dublin (2019).

Gertrude Gibbons is a PhD candidate at the University of York (AHRC funded through the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities), researching a history of theatre-making centred on the search for a universal language of theatre. Her thesis focuses on the nature of the living archive, and the interconnections and encounters between people, theatrical texts and performance. Her approach is interdisciplinary, and she is exploring concepts of reading and translation as performative, and the connections of hybrid theatre forms with the visual arts and music. She writes across various disciplines, including literature, art, design and music, and since 2018 has been co-editing and designing Soanyway with Derek Horton, an interdisciplinary online magazine, publishing three issues a year and themed specials.

Paper Session 2A : Audio Description and Beyond

Exploring Audio Description: Challenges in Moroccan Cinema and Television
Chaimae Alouan (University of York)

This research investigates the current state of Audio Description (AD) in Moroccan cinema and television, where accessibility for visually impaired audiences remains limited despite growing international awareness. Morocco became the first country in the MENA region to offer AD at the Marrakech International Film Festival as a major film event that pioneered AD efforts in 2009. However, AD's availability has since remained inconsistent, highlighting systemic challenges within the sector. Hence, this study identifies critical gaps and proposes strategies to support effective AD implementation. The methodology includes qualitative research with AD professionals and focus groups that further enrich the research by incorporating insights from visually impaired end users, thereby highlighting their specific needs and expectations. More specifically, the study analyses AD's cultural and practical significance, examining the broader implications of accessibility in media. It further explores how the lack of AD affects the visually impaired community's access to information and entertainment, including the emotional and social impacts of exclusion. Ultimately, this research advocates for a comprehensive AD framework tailored to the linguistic and cultural context of Moroccan audiences, fostering more inclusive media that recognises the importance of equal access and representation for all members of society.

Bio: My name is Chaimae Alouan, and I am a 3rd-year PhD student at the University of York. I hold a bachelor's degree in film studies from the Higher Institute of Audiovisual and Film Professions (ISMAC) in Morocco and a master's degree in sound engineering from the Superior School of Visual Arts Marrakech (ESAV Marrakech). I have worked as a freelancer in audio as a sound recordist and audio editor, and I have four years of experience as a replay operator in the VAR system with Mediapro in Morocco, including at the "2022 Women's Africa Cup of Nations". I hope to engage with fellow researchers and practitioners at the conference to explore new perspectives and strategies for enhancing AD in film and TV in Morocco.

Challenges in Applying Thai Audio Description Guidelines for Depicting Gestures and Facial Expressions in Thai Dramas

Kulnaree Sueroj (Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Thammasat University Thailand)

This content is part of a doctoral thesis entitled Strategies for Audio Describing Gestures and Facial Expressions for Visually Impaired Thai Television Audiences. The study collected data from focus group discussions with ten Thai audio describers who applied the current Thai AD guidelines to create scripts for fictional media. During these sessions, four sample Thai clips with different characteristics were shown to stimulate discussion. The data were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings indicated that participants often had to violate certain guidelines by placing AD over sound effects, which is prohibited by some guidelines. This was due to their frequent struggles to describe crucial visuals within tight time constraints. Another issue was the uncertainty about appropriate wording to assist blind and visually impaired (BVI) audiences in understanding the content, particularly when depicting gestures and facial expressions in various auditory contexts. Participants struggled to decide which actions to describe and how to approach different types of actions, both voluntary and involuntary, due to the lack of specific guidance in the existing guidelines. Additionally, participants also highlighted the absence of clear definitions for different AD styles. When AD was introduced in Thailand 1–3 years ago, objective styles were preferred over subjective ones. However, concerns arose about the vague definitions for subjective AD, particularly the distinction between "summarisation" and "interpretation," prompting discussions on appropriate AD standards. Finally, participants concluded that no single strategy exists for describing gestures and facial expressions across all emotions, as each emotion is expressed uniquely. This variability in emotional expression influences sensory comprehension differently for people with disabilities. Thus, strict guidelines against interpretation in AD scripts may not be suitable for conveying the diverse emotions of characters. These findings can be practically applied by proposing adjustments to Thailand's audio description guidelines through the media regulator. They can also be disseminated as a case study through a thesis and published articles.

Bio: I'm Kulnaree Sueroj. I earned my PhD in 2023 from the School of Arts and Creative Technologies at the University of York, with my thesis focusing on "Strategies for Audio Describing Gestures and Facial Expressions for Visually Impaired Thai Television Audiences." I currently serve as the Associate Dean for Research and Creative Works, as well as a lecturer in the Department of Radio Television and Digital Media within the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Thammasat University in Thailand, where I teach undergraduate and graduate courses on media and disability and conduct research in this area.

The blurred lines between information and entertainment: Thai blind and partially sighted audiences' preference for Audio Described news programmes.

Jooyin Saejang (Mahidol University), Animmarn Leksawat (Chulalongkorn University)

In Thailand, the concept of media accessibility remains largely underrepresented as reflected by the few and late relevant legal stipulations. For example, it was only in 2016 that the Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) announced the promotion and protection of disability rights to access and make use of programmes by telecommunication broadcasters. The announcement marked the first formalisation of standards for the provision of media accessibility services including audio description. It has since been revised twice: first in 2017 to postpone the imposition of the five-year plan for daily AD quotas on TV (Janevatchararuk et al., 2019); and secondly in 2020 to expand its imposition on commercial broadcasters and the types of content that require AD. The existing Thai AD guidelines – while helpful – are still quite narrow in scope. This study is a work in progress that attempts to partially fill this gap by firstly conducting a survey of AD users' needs and expectations for different genres of AD. Survey data have been collected on-site and online across the country. Preliminary results show that of ten audiovisual genres presented in the survey, news/current affairs programmes are in highest demand for AD provisions (211 out of 280 respondents). Although at this stage it is indeterminable why Thai blind and partially sighted people's AD preference runs counter to conventional wisdom that prioritises AD of entertainment media above "factual programmes", one possible explanation is the blurred lines between information and entertainment of news reportage (Boesman & Costera Meijer, 2018). Indeed, the prevalence of news stories delivered in the style of talk shows in Thailand has called into question the value of news media as, first and foremost, a source of factual information and further pushed the boundaries of what it means for media to be truly accessible for all.

Bios:

Jooyin Saejang is a lecturer at Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University. Her research interests span a wide range of subject areas including audiovisual translation, ideology in translation, activist translation, feminism, Marxism, and post-colonial studies. She has published on feminist translation, Thai fansubbing groups of Chinese boys' love (BL) dramas, and translated Chinese BL novels in Thailand. She is currently working on three research projects focusing on translation of Chinese BL, development of audio description in Thailand, and seniors' lifestyles and media literacy.

Animmarn Leksawat holds a PhD in Translation and Language Sciences from Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Spain, 2023). Her thesis focuses on the fansubbing practices of Thai TV series into Spanish by Spanish-speaking fans. She is currently a lecturer at Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation (CCTI), Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Her research interests include audiovisual translation, specifically pivot subtitling and media accessibility.

Wording the camp through a queer lens: Audio Description as an aesthetic experience

Gonzalo Iturregui-Gallardo (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Irene Hermosa-Ramírez (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Susan Sontag, in her famous essay, defines camp as a way of seeing the world as an artistic phenomenon that transforms the serious into frivolous (1966, 266). It is the love for the artificial and the exaggeration, it is not content that is essential in camp cultural expressions, but the aesthetic attitude, which is apolitical and deviated. Camp has been historically linked to the homosexual, particularly to homosexual men. In fact, from the disciplines of linguistics and translation studies, the way gay men talk or have talked along the years has been identified as camp talk. The translation of camp talk, as explored in Harvey (1990), linked the function of the camp to the property of the homosexual identity. His work is part of the pioneering research that was later established as Queer Translation.Based on some studies that explored the audio description (AD) of sexual and gender non-normativity (Iturregui-Gallardo, 2023; Iturregui-Gallardo & Hermosa-Ramírez, 2024) and others that assess the transfer of aesthetic elements in AD and their reception (Bardini, 2017; Fryer & Freeman, 2012), this communication approaches the representation of camp, which relies importantly on the visual, from a queer perspective. This study continues the treatment of camp in opera AD, briefly commented in Hermosa-Ramírez (2022). By means of examples of series such as Sex Education (4th season), we aim to discuss the representation of the camp through the verbal translation by applying Rancière's concept of aesthetics and the emotional experience of art. The queer perspective to AD allows for the identification of visual elements that are explicitly camp and enhance the aesthetic experience of the original audiovisual product. Examples will discuss the description of visual elements that seem out of place or diverge from traditional aesthetic understandings (singers in swimming suits in an opera in L'elisir d'amore, or God represented as a queer black woman in Sex Education).

Bios:

Iturregui-Gallardo holds a PhD in Translation and Intercultural Studies and is a Lecturer at the Department of Translation & Interpreting of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He has been a visiting researcher at the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa, and visiting professor at the Sao Paulo State University, in Brazil. Outside academia, he has worked as freelance translator and audio describer, mostly in the field of the scenic arts. He is part of SIFT (Seminar of Intersectionality, Feminism and Translation) and of the Institute of Communication (UAB). His research focuses on the meeting point of queer and feminist studies and media accessibility and translation.

Irene Hermosa-Ramírez, PhD in Translation and Intercultural Studies (Autonomous University of Barcelona), is a Juan de la Cierva postdoctoral researcher working for the UNIVAC project (Sensory accessibility at the Spanish university: current needs and prospective solutions) at Pompeu Fabra University. She is a member of the TraDiLex research group (2021 SGR 00952), from the same university. Irene specialises in Media Accessibility, having participated in the RAD project (Researching Audio Description: Translation, Delivery and New Scenarios) and the Erasmus+ project ATHENA (Bringing

Accessibility and Design for All into Higher Education Curricula) at the Transmedia Catalonia research group. Irene is the secretary of the Catalan Association for the Promotion of Accessibility.

Panel 2: Telepresence Stage and CRIPtic Arts Present "Quality of life is not a measurable outcome"

Paul Sermon (School of Art and Media, University of Brighton), Jayne Lloyd (School of Art and Media, University of Brighton), Jamie Hale (CRIPtic Arts), Steve Dixon (LASALLE College of the Arts/ University of the Arts Singapore), Colin Hambrook (Disability Arts Online)

A panel discussion of AHRC research project 'A Telepresence Stage for Disability Performing Arts', a residency programme with London-based performing arts company CRIPtic Arts (2024), one of the UK's most acclaimed disabled-led arts groups, who recently performed at London's Barbican. It culminated in a powerful online telepresence theatre production 'Quality of life is not a measurable outcome' (2024). Focussing on the phenomenological nature of the performance, its devising and realisation during residency sessions and rehearsals that linked remote performers from the UK and Singapore, four members of the project team offer presentations from different perspectives. Lead performer and writer Jamie Hale (CRIPtic Arts) provides autoethnographic reflection on the process and the socio-political aspects of the performance, Dr Jayne Lloyd (University of Brighton) offers phenomenological observations as a remote viewer, Professor Steve Dixon (LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts Singapore) provides theoretical analysis and talks to performer Jade Ow Yanhui (ART:DIS Singapore) about her experience of remote choreography and direction, and panel chair Professor Paul Sermon (University of Brighton) analyses perceptual and proprioceptive aspects of digital telepresence scenography and access. The panel will unpack their experiences and encounters during the residency, including how they overcame technical and theoretical barriers and celebrated disability using vivid scenography and virtual imagery including flying wheelchairs with angel wings. They will discuss and demonstrate new methods and practical applications of telematic and design technologies to support accessibility and inclusion for disabled actors, producers and audiences. These offer a range of flexible options for participation; create a sense of liveness and togetherness for actors and audiences participating remotely; utilise and adapt widely available/off-the-shelf technology in theatres and at home; and stimulate new and different forms of interaction and engagement for disability arts.

As part of the panel, we will play the video recording of the CRIPtic Arts performance, which contains full BSL and captions throughout. Audio Description available here.

More info at http://www.telepresencestage.org.

Bios:

Paul Sermon is a Professor of Visual Communication in the School of Art and Media at the University of Brighton, UK. He has worked as an active academic researcher and creative practitioner for over thirty years and has developed a series of celebrated interactive telematic art installations. Having worked under the visionary cybernetic artist Professor Roy Ascott as an undergraduate Fine Art student in the mid-1980s, Paul Sermon went on to establish himself as a leading pioneer of interactive media art, winning the Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Linz, Austria, in 1991. It was an accolade that then took Paul to Finland to develop one of the most ground-breaking telepresent video installations of his career Telematic Dreaming in 1992. He is currently the principal investigator for the AHRC research project (AH/Y004000/1) A Telepresence Stage for Disability Performing Arts.

Jayne Lloyd is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art and former Course Leader of MA Inclusive Arts Practice at the University of Brighton. An artist and researcher who works across sculpture, drawing, and performance in her own arts practice and in the development and realisation of inclusive arts projects. Her research focuses on the role of arts and artists can play in the lives of disabled people and people living with dementia.

Jamie Hale is a queer / crip artist, curator, poet, writer, screenwriter, playwright, actor, facilitator, trainer and director, policy analyst and CEO. This is otherwise known as 'busy', 'interdisciplinary', or 'indecisive'. They create poetry, comedy, scriptwriting, and drama for page, stage, and screen. In Feb 2021, they won the Evening Standard Future Theatre Fund Award in Directing/Theatre-Making for their solo show, NOT DYING. They have since performed it across the UK and screened it internationally. Verve Poetry Press published their first poetry pamphlet, Shield, in Jan 2021. They have an original screenplay in development with Channel 4. Jamie also founded CRIPtic Arts. CRIPtic is an award-winning organisation committed to developing and programming work by deaf and disabled people. CRIPtic achieves this through showcasing work, building creative networks, and using research and training to change access in the arts sector.

Steve Dixon is the president of LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts Singapore, and director of the multimedia performance company The Chameleons Group. A leading theorist on the use of computer technologies in the arts, he is the author of 'Cybernetic-Existentialism' (Routledge 2020) and the award-winning 'Digital Performance: A History of New Technologies in Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation' (MIT Press 2007). Co-director of the AHRB 'Digital Performance Archive', co-founder of the 'International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media' (Routledge), and a member of journal editorial boards 'Body, Space and Technology', 'CTheory' and 'Global Performance Studies'.

Colin Hambrook is the founder and editor of Disability Arts Online. He has worked as a manager/ editor/ researcher/ sub-editor for a variety of web and print-based disability arts and mainstream publications since 1994. He established Disability Arts Online in 2004 as a place which publishes professional arts writing, arts media and discussion, giving a voice to arts practitioners who identify with disability as a creative, artistic and political force.

Paper Session 2B: Gaming, VR and more: accessibility, representation and technology

Game on: Unpacking accessibility and storytelling in The Last of Us Part II

Sara Błachut (Jagiellonian University in Kraków)

This presentation aims to provide an in-depth examination of accessibility settings featured in Naughty Dog's The Last of Us Part II game. With over 60 configurable options, this title is currently one of the most remarkable productions in the game industry in terms of accessibility. Its users have been offered a wide range of configurable options which can be further adjusted and integrated according to their individual needs. This talk will analyze the game's three primary accessibility presets (offered by Naughty Dog): the vision accessibility preset designed for the blind and visually impaired players, the hearing accessibility preset tailored for the Deaf or hard of hearing and motor accessibility preset made for gamers with a physical or mobility disability; additionally, the full control customization option will be explored. Key focus areas will also include the efficiency of these features in narrative transmission. A particular emphasis will be put on how certain plot-relevant details are conveyed through alternative modalities, such as visual representation of audio gameplay information, and to what extent all the essential storytelling aspects are communicated. The attendees will be introduced to the main specifics of the game (including the plot, gameplay mechanics, game's core elements) and the challenges associated with them. Accessibility features will be evaluated according to the guidelines proposed by current literature on game accessibility. This talk will help identify the pivotal aspects of making a video game accessible for the widest possible range of players and map out the areas that might still require improvement.

Bio: Sara Błachut is a graduate of translation studies at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. As a translator and editor she collaborated, among others, with East Carolina University and Cochrane organisation. Particularly interested in accessibility in video games, through her research and projects she examines how emerging tech can transform the translation landscape, especially with regard to the issue of audiodescription and modern accessibility tools for people with disabilities.

Neurodivergent TTRPG Design Workshop Ethnography

Giuseppe Femia (University of Waterloo)

Disability is not an aspect of culture that we often see adequately represented in our modern media (Dolmage 20; Ellcessor and Kirkpatrick 43). When the majority of contemporary games are designed with an able-bodied and neurotypical main character in mind (Ledder 30), playing a character with a disability puts the player at an unnecessary disadvantage for the goal of winning the game, a handicap if you will. So, when academics attempt to look for disability representation in gaming culture, they are left with few good examples to draw from as there does not seem to be a common appeal for people without disabilities, outside of fetishization of identity tourism, to play a disabled character when they are more likely to have physical, mental, and social barriers in accessing the game world (Jung par. 3-6). In

this talk, I present the ethnographic findings, concerning the positioning of disability in Tabletop Roleplaying Games (TTRPG), of a workshop I conducted to address this scholarly gap, as well as the resulting TTRPG design for neurodivergent representation and storytelling. In the Fall of 2024, I ran a Neurodivergent TTRPG Design Workshop as part of my dissertation research, bringing together Neurodivergent Scholars, Activists, and Game Designers in a storytelling and community-building initiative. The purpose of the workshop was to observe instances of TTRPG design done by and for neurodivergent individuals with a heavy emphasis on allowing anyone playing the game to tell their neurodivergent story. In this presentation, I display the TTRPG media artefact resulting from the workshop as my object text and explain the thematic design choices that went into the neurodivergent representation. I supplement this work by drawing from an array of disability media theorist such as Christa Mullis, Kathleen C. Sitter et al., Kara Stone, Adrienne E. Raw, and Elizabeth Ellcessor and Bill Kirkpatrick. The research question I use to focus my work is: How can we approach TTRPG design to respectfully include and acknowledge the diverse experiences of neurodivergence while still being critical of disabling politics and social injustice in the real world? This will be approached from two angles: 1) navigation of the social and physical environments illustrated through the game mechanics; and 2) relatable neurodivergent themes within the narrative. Concerning game mechanics, the TTRPG design will have neurodivergent-informed methods of taking action and navigating the world for the players' characters. I observe instances where mechanics that represent neurodiversity within the player characters thematically exemplify neurodivergent values and understandings of the world. By observing the mechanics available to the player, I develop an understanding of how neurodivergent stories are and are not approached by the workshop participants. Concerning narratives, the neurodivergence of the characters play into the story that is made and interpreted entirely by the players. Therefore, the framing of the story provided by the game system sets a precedent of what the players' expectations might be. For example, the dark fantasy genre of TTRPGs tends to implicate tragedy so depictions of characters with neurodivergence are not afforded a positive setting to frame themselves in. Within the narrative, we can observe how neurodivergent stories are framed and depicted by the workshop participants.

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Bio: Giuseppe Femia is an English PhD Candidate at the University of Waterloo. He previously completed a double major for his Bachelor of Arts, in English, Rhetoric, Media, and Professional Communication & Honours Arts and Business, as well as a Master of Arts, in Rhetoric and Communication Design, both at Waterloo. Giuseppe's current research in game studies, media studies, queer studies, disability studies, and performance studies observes different types of gaming media and the appeal it has to its audience. He previously presented his work on queer reparative play and Dungeons & Dragons at the Transformative Play Initiative Seminar in Visby, Sweden, and then had it published as a peer-reviewed article in the International Journal of Role-Playing. Giuseppe is now partnering up with other scholars researching the intersection of disability studies and game studies to broaden the horizons of the growing field.

A Framework for Inclusive Music-Making with Repurposed Game Controllers

Calvin McCormack (Stanford University)

(The system will also be demonstrated during the Day 2 Exhibition/Interactive Session.)

Commercial video game controllers can be repurposed into robust and cost-effective human-computer interfaces for individuals with limited motor function to create digital music. They are well-engineered, durable, globally available and standardized, and can easily interface with computers and smartphones using freely available open-source software. Buttons, joysticks, touchpads, and accelerometers can be remapped and programmed to create custom configurations and adapt to individual abilities in motor function. Past-generation gaming controllers are often available at considerable discount, making them an ideal solution for scalable distribution to low-income communities. In recent years, console manufacturers have produced accessible controllers for their game systems, but these are costly and have limited global availability. However standard controllers can be modified, augmented, and customized through open-source communities and low-cost,

digital fabrication. This research highlights the successful implementation of game controller musical interfaces in a rural, low-income environment, and proposes establishing a collective framework of software, hardware augmentations, and musical and pedagogical practices for game controllers. Previous research has often relied on digital musical instruments custom built by skilled researchers; effective, yet typically developed only as research prototypes that are difficult to scale or distribute. This hinders the development of standardized pedagogical methods, compositional practices, and collaborative development communities. Field research conducted at a non-profit outreach center in northern India, which compared the effectiveness of a variety of digital musical instrument prototypes, both custom-built devices and repurposed commercial game controllers, demonstrated the advantages game controllers present as an opportunity to build a common collaborative framework and effectively help as many people as possible. With a standardized foundation in place, this will allow researchers, musicians, and care practitioners to focus their efforts around the further development of custom configurations for different musical idioms and individual disabilities, all easily built upon a common framework.

Bio: Calvin McCormack is a designer, musician, programmer, and educator from Baltimore, USA and is currently pursuing a master's degree at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA) at Stanford University. He completed his bachelor's degree in jazz from the University of Michigan, where he focused on the intersection of jazz and non-western musical idioms. Since 2018, Calvin has been working with CED Society, a Dehradun-based non-profit dedicated to supporting women and people with disabilities in the Himalayan border region. Together with CED Society, Calvin has helped launch Sound of Soul, a nonprofit music education center and recording studio designed to empower disadvantaged women through music education and multimedia production skills. Calvin was awarded a Fulbright-Nehru research grant in 2022 and spent twelve months in northern India designing and testing accessible musical instruments for people with disabilities in affiliation with Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi.

Universal Design In VR. Inside: a case study of multi-sensory VR biography

Dr Tom Livingstone (UWE) & Professor Mandy Rose (UWE)

Inside is a VR experience being produced by UK immersive artist Sacha Wares (Museum of Austerity, Adult Children) with creative agency All Seeing Eye (In pursuit of Repetitive Beats, Draw me Close, DamBusters VR). The work is a biography of the renowned US sculptor, Judith Scott (1943-2005), who was deaf and had Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome). Wares' multi-sensory biography responds to the provocation: how might we tell Judith Scott's story in a way that would be accessible to her, were she still alive to see it ? The paper will situate Inside within a context of immersive media experiences that are increasingly multi-modal and multi-sensory, with content reaching us not just through our eyes and ears but through forms of embodied experience including smell, touch and proprioception. These forms of sensory engagement now intersect with documentary themes within XR formats and have contributed to a vital discourse concerned with the expanded fields and rhetorical and

political affordances of immersive nonfiction (Jihoon Kim, 2022; Livingstone & Rose, 2024). Considering Inside through the lens of tactile epistemology (Laura Marks, 2000), the paper asks what's at stake for documentary in the decentring of ocular-centrism reflected in immersive non-fiction. Specifically, the paper will seek to consider how Inside as a production provides critical access to three inter-related concerns: first, the challenge of representing the experience of someone whose sensory access to the world is not typically reflected in dominant media. Second, the means by which the production process and the final media experience can be kept as accessible as possible to uwe widest range of performers, participants and audiences. Lastly, how taken together, Inside's innovations in this space highlight some of the obstacles to access and inclusivity that are not only entrenched in traditional media formats but oftentimes are being unthinkingly translated to emergent XR workflows and exhibition practices. The paper will conclude by assessing how Inside's approach to telling Judith Scott's story might help develop innovative ways of approaching universal design in immersive media projects.

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Bios:

Dr Tom Livingstone is a Research Fellow at The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) working within MyWorld, a creative R&D programme driving creative technology expansion and innovation in the south west of England. His research focuses on emergent media with a particular interest in the impact of game engines on visual culture. He has published widely on film and digital media and his first book Hybrid Images and the Vanishing Point of Digital Visual Effects will be published by Edinburgh University Press in October 2024. Email: tom.livingstone@uwe.ac.uk

Mandy Rose is Professor of Documentary & Digital Cultures at UWE Bristol. Her current research explores immersive media as a platform for engaging speculative futures, more-than-human worlds and multisensory experience. She is Co-Investigator on the UKRI Strength in Places My World programme. She was Co-Investigator on the EPSRC Virtual Realities: Immersive Documentary Encountersproject. She is Co-Convenor of i-Docs. She is a Fellow at MIT OpenDoc Lab. Mandy is on the Executive Board of Bristol's Pervasive Media Studio. Before moving into research, Mandy oversaw award-winning interactive and participatory media initiatives including BBC 2's ground-breaking Video Nation project (Prix Iris, CRE Race in the Media Award) and the Capture Wales/Cipolwg ar Gymru (BAFTA Cymru) digital storytelling project. 1Mandy is co-editor of i-docs: the evolving practices of

interactive documentary - Wallflower Press 2017. Her recent writing appears in Studies in Documentary Film, World Records and Convergence.

Performance 2: 'The Importance of Sleep' an online Telepresence Stage video performance by Jack Li

Paul Sermon (School of Art and Media, University of Brighton), Morna McGeoch (Birds of Paradise Theatre Company), Jack Li (Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong (ADAHK))

A live demonstration of an online telepresence video performance, allowing conference delegates, two at a time on separate computers, to interact and perform within the live-streamed video sequence. The telepresence video performance 'The Importance of Sleep' was developed by Hong Kong artist Jack Li, commissioned by Birds of Paradise Theatre Company (BOP) and Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong (ADAHK) for the British Council Hong Kong SPARK III Festival, 18th to 20th October 2024. The commission and collaboration with ADAHK resulted from BOP's involvement in the AHRC research project 'A Telepresence Stage for Disability Performing Arts' (AH/Y004000/1) led by Paul Sermon at the University of Brighton, School of Art and Media.

'The Importance of Sleep' is a 7-minute experimental video performance with an opportunity for live audience participation via a computer webcam. The work explores how the human body prepares for a new day during sleep, based on the Chinese legend of Zhou Gong, the God of Dreams. The story depicts a character falling asleep after a long day, told through digital scenography with integrated Cantonese sign language and Cantonese/English audio description. Throughout the night, Zhou Gong cleans and repairs several organs in the body with the help of two online participants, who appear inside recreated organs, such as the liver and lungs, where they playfully improvise cleaning tasks. Previous recordings of the interactive performance can be seen [here].

The online artwork utilises techniques in online video chat and streaming media, such as virtual backgrounds and networked video production, combined with virtual green-screen compositing and set design to superimpose and composite remote participants together. It was a significant technical challenge to put the participants inside the original video artwork, but with live video compositing software and Jack Li's support, we reconstructed his video, layer by layer, as a unique interactive telepresence experience.

More info at http://www.telepresencestage.org.

Bios:

Paul Sermon is a Professor of Visual Communication in the School of Art and Media at the University of Brighton, UK. He has worked as an active academic researcher and creative practitioner for over thirty years and has developed a series of celebrated interactive telematic art installations. Having worked under the visionary cybernetic artist Professor Roy Ascott as an undergraduate Fine Art student in the mid-1980s, Paul Sermon went on to establish himself as a leading pioneer of interactive media art, winning the Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica in Linz, Austria, in 1991. It was an accolade that then took Paul to Finland to develop one of the most ground-breaking telepresent video installations of his career Telematic Dreaming in 1992. He is currently the principal investigator for the AHRC research project (AH/Y004000/1) A Telepresence Stage for Disability Performing Arts.

Morna is a Glasgow-based theatre-maker with 9 years of experience working in participatory arts in Scotland. Morna has worked with the National Theatre of Scotland, Citizens Theatre, Tron Theatre, Scottish Youth Theatre, Youth Theatre Arts Scotland and many other creative organisations. Morna's creative practice combines various roles, including design, facilitation, making and shaping, mentoring, directing, performing, producing, as well as planning and management. Morna is the Development Officer at Birds of Paradise Theatre Company (BOP), predominantly working on BOP Young Artists, which involves working with the Executive Producer and the Engagement & Office Manager to plan, deliver and develop the Young Artists Project. Morna's time is spent planning workshops, discussing exciting development opportunities with other organisations, delivering workshops, managing trips to productions and events, writing funding applications and evaluation reports, and planning with the BOP team.

Jack Li is an Artist of the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong (ADAHK) and an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society (ARPS). Over the years, Jack has received various achievements in both local and international photography competitions and this project has been an opportunity to expand his creative language. He hopes to encourage more people with disabilities to explore photography, broaden their horizons and express their inner worlds through artistic creation.

Paper Session 3: Inclusive Creative Practices: Past, Present and Future

A History of Audio Description in Australia

Mike Kent (Curtin University), Katie Ellis (Curtin University)

The presentation explores the history and future of Audio Description in Australia. More specifically it reports on the first half of a three-year project that explores the history, contemporary environment, and future of accessible media through Audio Description in Australia as part of an Australian Research Council funded study at Curtin University. Both presenters have been closely involved in the evolving accessible media landscape in Australia, and particularly as this manifests through the availability of Audio Description. In this presentation we will explore and attempt to address if there is an Australia voice in audio description, where it can be found, and what it sounds like. Recent investigations of AD in the Australian context have tended to focus on the absence of AD in this country, yet the availability of AD in Australia has steadily increased and there exists an underexplored historical legacy of AD content and practices. For example, John Simpson's 1999 digital television policy position paper identifies key moments of radio-television simulcast in the 1980s and 90s where both Wimbledon matches and popular Australian dramas such as Water Rats were described on community radio (Simpson, 1999). Our own research reveals that AD is available in a number of different cultural contexts including in arts and tourism and is used by audiences beyond the blind and vision impaired (Ellis, Peaty, McRae, Kent, & Locke, 2019). The paper report on research based on the search of records and archival material as well as interviews with AD practitioners and industry representatives both past and present. The development and deployment of AD in Australia provides an interesting

point of contrast with other anglophile countries such as the US, UK and New Zealand, with each taking a different pathway to the deployment of this assistive technology.

Bios:

Mike Kent is a Professor and Head of School for Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University in Western Australia.

Katie Ellis is a Professor in Internet Studies and Director of the Centre for Culture and Technology at Curtin University.

Integrated Accessibility in Filmmaking: A Framework for Inclusive Content Creation

Zainab Rabbaa (University Ibn Tofail of Kenitra, University of Quebec in Montreal)

As the demand for accessible media expands, the film industry faces a crucial transition viewing accessibility not merely as an ethical obligation but as a significant creative opportunity. Traditionally, accessibility components such as audio descriptions, captions, and sign language interpretations have been integrated only at the final stages of production, often perceived as supplementary rather than integral to the creative vision. This research challenges this practice, proposing an integrated accessibility approach that considers inclusivity from the earliest stages of concept development through to the final production.To explore this approach thoroughly, the research employs qualitative methods involving semi-structured interviews and targeted focus groups. Interviews conducted with filmmakers delve into existing production practices and perceptions regarding accessibility integration. Accessibility consultants contribute professional insights into the practical and creative barriers faced in current methodologies. Additionally, focus groups with disabled viewers provide essential experiential perspectives, capturing the direct impact of accessibility practices on audience engagement. The collected qualitative data is analyzed through thematic analysis, systematically identifying recurring patterns and emergent themes that illuminate the strengths and limitations of current accessibility practices. This robust analytical approach ensures that findings reflect authentic stakeholder experiences and highlight practical opportunities for innovation. Preliminary findings suggest that integrating accessibility into the creative process not only enhances viewer engagement and expands potential audiences but also facilitates genuine, meaningful representation of disabled communities. Drawing on these insights, this research proposes a comprehensive framework designed to assist filmmakers in embedding inclusive practices throughout all phases of production, fostering an inclusive filmmaking culture. Ultimately, this study contributes to broader academic and industry conversations on disability, accessibility, and representation in media, underscoring integrated accessibility as a critical element for inclusive storytelling and broader audience connectivity.

Bio: Moroccan filmmaker based in Montreal. A painter and film editor, she holds a master's degree in documentary cinema and is currently pursuing a PhD in cinematic imagery, titled

The Formulation of Colors in Cinematic Imagery: From Painting to cinema.

Storytelling, Fairy Tales and ADHD: Adapting Narratives for Neurodivergent Audiences

Lacey Allen (University of York)

The project focuses on exploring the fairy tale structure and how this can be beneficial for neurodivergent audiences, specifically those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). One of the main symptoms of ADHD is a deficit in attention, which can cause distractibility. The research focuses on improving attention retention for ADHD audiences through storytelling and explores how the enjoyment of films and literature should be prioritised for all audiences. Fairy tales have structures that enable readers to follow their narratives easily, which could support adults and children with ADHD to retain attention when engaging with different medias. To establish whether the fairy tale structure can improve attention retention, I develop a more succinct set of narrative functions that are reflective of the fairy tale structure, to investigate the benefits of the fairy tale in relation to attention retention of ADHD audiences. Fairy tales draw on a range of genres, including elements of Adventure, Fantasy, Romance and Horror: I conducted a survey to explore whether there is a difference in genre preference in ADHD and non-ADHD audiences, and to investigate if there is a connection between narrative structure, genre and attention span. The survey found that the Horror genre was the least favoured genre amongst both ADHD and non-ADHD participant groups. I applied the findings of the survey to the experiment, where I investigate rates of attention retention, by applying the Fairy tale genre onto the Horror genre through an audio story, to establish whether the Fairy tale can improve attention retention. From this application, the narrative points retained improved for ADHD audiences when engaging with the Fairy tale story, as opposed to the Horror. These findings will be introduced in relation to their potential to pave the way toward greater inclusivity of ADHD audiences. For the conference, I will share the project experiment, along with its findings and explore the accessibility implications that the project addresses through a paper presentation.

Bio: I am a postgraduate researcher at University of York, where I am currently writing up my PhD thesis for a submission in January 2025. My research focuses on media accessibility for neurodivergent audiences, through the use of the fairy tale narrative structure. I am passionate about accessibility in general and other interests of mine include: neurodiversity, inclusivity, disability and interactivity in education. I aspire to be involved in further disability/accessibility research once I finalise my PhD thesis, and continue the progression of accessibility research within the creative sector.

Integrating the Senses: A Reevaluation of Participation Methods

Caitlin McHugh (Teesside University)

This essay explores how multi-sensory experiences enhance visitor engagement by acknowledging bodily awareness. While this approach benefits dis/abled visitors, sensory engagement can enrich experiences for all audiences. Central to this research is the development of an 'Integrated Model of Disability', which builds upon and bridges the Social, Human Rights and Affirmative models of disability. This feminist model seeks to create a more balanced, interrelated and holistic approach to accessibility by integrating key elements of these existing frameworks. It addresses gaps in current models by proposing strategies that emphasise agency, interdependence and the complexity of dis/ability rather than relying on singular solutions.

The Integrated Model of Disability proposes:

- Rethinking difference collectively and individually (from the Affirmative Model).
- Embracing the unique ways of being situated in society (from the Affirmative Model)
- Recognising that environments are discriminatory and ableist (from the Social Model)
- Acknowledging intersecting discriminations beyond dis/ability (from the Human Rights Model)
- Caring 'with' rather than 'for' individuals by fostering autonomy and participation
- Rejecting 'fixer' and 'fixee' narratives, which limit collaboration and agency
- Understanding that no single solution suits all, embracing the complexity of dis/ability

This model is implemented through three creative design methods, which serve as practical strategies for ensuring meaningful participation within institutional and artistic spaces:
- Affective Collaboration: Prioritising emotionally driven, co-creative processes, where dis/abled artists and audiences actively shape the artistic and curatorial experience rather than being passive participants. This method challenges institutional hierarchies by positioning all collaborators as equal contributors to meaning-making
- Sensory Gain: Shifting from access as an afterthought to designing for sensory inclusivity from the outset. This approach recognises multi-sensory engagement as a primary mode of interaction, benefiting all visitors, not just those with sensory impairments
- Spacelessness: Rethinking how spaces are designed and navigated, emphasising flexible, adaptive environments that accommodate diverse ways of experiencing art. Spaceless areas are areas of importance within galleries but with no anchoring focal point. This challenges traditional spatial constraints, expands the concept of space and advocates for an open-ended, non-restrictive approach to exhibition-making

To ground this research in practice, I analyse Shape Arts' Crip Art Spazio as a key case study, providing an international perspective on sensory-inclusive curation. Additionally, conversations with artist Seo Hye Lee offer insight into how her Deaf experience informs her approach to collaboration and multi-sensory engagement. Her work in Tangled Art's Object Sensations (2024), MIMA's Towards New Worlds (2024) and South London Gallery's 'The Conch' event (2025) highlights the complex relationship between dis/abled artists and institutions, demonstrating how sensory integration can facilitate more inclusive artistic practices.

By framing this research through an anti-tokenistic lens, I move beyond gestures of inclusion toward an integrated, participatory model of engagement. The Integrated Model of Dis/ability does not ignore the social impact of dis/ability but instead works toward post-normative equity, one that considers the full spectrum of identity, agency and participation. Given the overlap between this work and sensory museology, further research will explore how this field informs or diverges from the proposed framework. To advance these ideas, it is crucial to apply them within institutions and advocate for sensory experiences as fundamental to equitable art engagement.

Bio: Caitlin McHugh (she/her) is a Manchester-based curator and researcher. She is currently completing an MA in Curation at Teesside University and has a previous background in Special Needs education. She has worked alongside MIMA, Venture Arts and is currently researching into 'The spatiality of a crisis house as a way to explore methods of fragile embodiment'. Caitlin's curatorial research explores experimental knowledge production, dis/ability integration into gallery education and participatory approaches to learning and play. She believes that instinct and conversation are essential aspects of curation. Caitlin was a recipient of the British Council Venice Fellowship 2024 and a speaker at the WBAN and QBAN conference 2024.

Bridging the Communication Gap Between Staff and Audiences: A Case Study of Museum Accessibility Practices

Andy Egerton (University of York)

Museums have needed to adapt in a changing, modern world, in order to compete with other institutions for potential audiences' attention, time and money. This has translated into an adaptable use of new technologies to support its activities. Digital Culture 2019 by Arts Council England and Nesta reported that these technologies were seen as most useful for marketing and archival/preservation purposes within the sector. The same report also stated that two big barriers to the implementation of new technologies were the lack of in-house staff time, and lack of funding. Furthermore, use of digital technologies for improving accessibility in museums specifically can tend to be focused on VR and AR experiences, but these do not have to be the end-all-be-all creative access practices, particularly as VR can be uncomfortable for some users. Instead, this paper will explore how better accessibility practices in museums can be built by bridging the staff and audience communication gap through, first of all, creating better web accessibility by providing clearer and more detailed information about access provisions and resources on museum websites and their integrated tools. Then, through opening a channel of communication between visitors and staff. This might look like evaluating staff service quality for accessibility and improving cross and internal departmental communications for carrying visitor feedback from front of house to back, and further up the chain of command. This paper will present both staff and audiences' issues and needs in the development process of exhibitions through a museum-based case study. Matching a site's access information with their proclaimed mission and working culture ensures that accessibility is a priority and built-in consideration from the get-go, rather than a secondary add-on. This also shifts the onus of preparation

away from the visitor by making their planning process faster, more efficient, and facilitating spontaneity in visits, increasing visitor numbers in the long run.

Bio: Andy Egerton is a Second Year PhD Researcher at TFTI, currently working on a CDA funded by WRoCAH and in partnership with York Museums Trust and Human Studio. Andy's PhD looks at the creation of inclusive, interactive, accessible museum exhibits through a case study of York Museums Trust. With an undergraduate degree in History and Politics from The New School in NYC, and a masters in Renaissance and Early Modern Studies from the University of York, Andy is interested in museum accessibility, efforts to queer museum curation, community archiving, and rendering historical pedagogy accessible and engaging. In 2023, he was a Research Assistant for the music strand of the University of York's StreetLife project, and produced the 'Love it or Hate it? The Willow Legacy' exhibition in addition to 'The Queer Walk of York' presented at the Festival of Ideas in 2023-24.

Panel 3: Technology, Inclusivity, and Co-Creation of Disability Performing Arts in the Global Easts

Gili Hammer (The Hebrew University), Dr. Yuichiro Nagatsu (Kyushu University), Dr. Hanna Zaremba-Kosovych (The Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine)

This panel explores the cultural, social, material, and spatial dimensions of "inclusivity" in disability (performing) arts, with examples from Ukraine, Israel, and Japan. Drawing on the concept of the Global Easts as an ""imaginary geography"" (Lim 2022), we examine how the Global Easts disrupt conventional geopolitics by highlighting regions sharing historical and political dynamics despite geographical distance. We aim to uncover local histories and practices that have shaped disability experiences and artistic expressions in these regions, while also engaging with global disability rights movements.Through an interdisciplinary lens, the panel investigates how disability performance art both mirrors and challenges local cultural norms on inclusivity and access through methods such as co-creation. We will explore the relationship between arts and politics in a broader sense, analyzing specific terminologies, symbols, and aesthetic strategies employed in different Eastern contexts, seeking to contribute new insights to the fields of disability studies and performance art, exploring opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and knowledge exchange. Examples include the Na Laggat Deaf-Blind Theater in Jaffa, Israel, the integration theater And Laughter and Tears the art studio atelieronormalno in Ukraine, and Nicochannokai in Fukuoka, Japan. This panel serves as a platform to advocate for the transformative power of disability performance art, particularly in times of political turbulence and social division.

Bios:

Dr. Gili Hammer is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Program of Cultural Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is an anthropologist and scholar specializing in disability studies, performance studies, and sensory anthropology. Her work explores embodied and sensory diversity in disability

performing arts, and she has conducted ethnographic research in Israel and the United States, examining the cultural and political dimensions of inclusive art spaces and their role in fostering social change. Her main publications address topics such as embodied knowledge, sensory diversity, and inclusive art practices, with a current focus on disability art in the Global East. She is the author of Blindness through the Looking Glass: The Performance of Blindness, Gender, and the Sensory Body (University of Michigan Press, 2019) and numerous articles.

Dr. Yuichiro Nagatsu is an Associate Professor, Faculty of Design, Kyushu University. He is a researcher who accompanies people to arts opportunities where relationships are created between people. He is a researcher specializing in arts management and cultural policy and is particularly interested in Japanese trends regarding artistic activities for people with disabilities. In addition, he is a practitioner of education in practical music skills and workshops, and an arts manager and producer in the field of theater and dance.

Hannah Zaremba-Kosovych (1990), PhD in Sociology, Research Fellow of the Department of Social Anthropology (The Ethnology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). She was an analyst in the projects: WARPATH: the story of the rescue of people with disabilities during the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Art for all: situations with the maintenance of cultural rights of people with disabilities in Ukraine, You can believe: the story of people with disabilities since 1945 to 2020 (Germany, Ukraine), Being the first: stories of public activists for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities in Ukraine in the 1990s and others. Co-author of the book History is not without us: the formation of the movement for the rights of people with disabilities in Ukraine. Scientific interests: social (in)justice, disability research, intellectual disability research. Email: ganna.zaremba@gmail.com.

Performance 3: A Kaleidoscope of Sensory Experience - Access as a Catalyst for Innovation and Creativity

Lucy Bennett (Stopgap Dance Company), Lily Norton (Stopgap Dance Company), Nadenh Poan (Performer, Stopgap Dance Company). Emily Lue-Fong (Performer, Stopgap Dance Company). Ben Glover (Digital Artist and Creative Captions). Dougie Evans (Composer and Sound Designer). Ryan Dawson-Laight (Costume Designer)

Established in 1995, Stopgap Dance Company is a global leader in inclusivity and dance. Driven by a diverse creative team who uses dance as a movement for change, our mission is to create an inclusive and equitable world where diversity is pursued. Stopgap's latest artistic evolution is guided by a deep care for our audiences, holding access as a catalyst for innovation and creativity. Stopgap will present an extract (18 minutes) from our latest production Lived Fiction. Followed by a discussion with the collaborative team to illuminate the research and creative process behind a production that prioritises care for Deaf, Disabled and neurodivergent audiences. Lived Fiction places the aesthetics of access at its core. Seeking to address barriers to art, whilst also recognising the enormous artistic potential of access. Integrating audio description, creative captioning and a relaxed

environment with world class choreography, each element is given its own artistic voice so the work takes on a new form resonating with diverse audiences. This presentation showcases innovation in creative audio description (AD) within contemporary dance to enrich audiences' experience. We move AD beyond traditional forms using descriptive narration to convey movement, emotion and diverse perspectives. This particular extract demonstrates a collaboration between dancer, choreographer and describer, and how AD can be used to illuminate the movement mechanics of Disabled performers, alongside exploring subjectivity through poetic interpretation. Performed live accompanied by creative captions, this invites all audiences to engage with dance in a new way. Lived Fiction was developed alongside Access Consultants with diverse lived experience as part of the research project "DANCING", funded by the European Research Council.

"There are certain works that permanently alter one's perception of the world; Lived Fiction is one such creation." A Young(ish) Perspective

"The description not only itemises the movement but also elevates small things you might not see - in an intimate atmospheric duet… for example - into something quite beautiful and quietly revolutionary." The Guardian

Bios:

Lucy Bennett (She/They) is Stopgap Dance Company's Co-Artistic Director and is Director and Co-Writer of Lived Fiction. Immersed in Stopgap's work since 2003, Lucy has learnt to blend and expand the dynamic interaction of distinctly different dancers. Working as a choreographer within a company of diverse dancers has allowed Lucy to develop, define and encapsulate her love for expressing human stories through dance.

Lily Norton (They/Them) is Stopgap Dance Company's Access Artist, and is Co-Writer and Audio Describer of Lived Fiction. As Access Artist, Lily is passionate about collaborating across the company's projects, productions and educational outputs to ensure Stopgap are realising their vision of inclusive and accessible dance. They are endlessly fascinated by the many different ways we experience this world, and use their experience as an autistic artist to inform their creative approach. As an audio describer their practice seeks to de-centre sight, exploring innovative, poetic approaches to language, staging, and delivery that open up new sensory pathways for engaging with performance.

Day 2: Friday 12th September

Photography Exhibition: "Right Here, Right Now. It's Historical, Big, Huge and Beautiful"

Ed Clews (Falmouth University)

(You can chat to Ed during the 10.30am coffee break and from 1-2.30pm.)

Hidden near the village of Bishopthorpe, a community of people come together. In this place – which many pass every day unknowingly – people are making wood-worked items, growing vegetables to sell, and developing the garden. They have been doing this for nearly twenty years. Both myself and my wife have been part of this community for a decade. Within the Archbishops' walled garden, adults with learning disabilities are provided with a work-like environment. My project is a portrait of this community. Gardens have a particular psychological effect, creating a place of sanctuary and growth in which individuals can find and uncover their values. At Brunswick, people can thrive, be validated and be seen on their own terms. The project is designed to be multiformat with photography, audio and video to fit different environments for different exhibitions - the core of it being a photobook. Subjects can opt in and out at any time, which means variations at each showing. I expect to work on the project for another five to ten years at least and it is a constantly evolving work-in-progress. My research looks at disability and representation and is a continuation of my MA work at Falmouth University. I am examining how a community and individual's identity can be empowered to be seen without directly addressing labels that would societally define them and avoiding adding to what John Urry called a "closed circle of representation" (Urry 2001). As well as documenting this organisation, my aim is to add more nuance to how the community can be represented within the conversation at large. Disability can be a trope like the Inspirationally Disadvantaged or Super Crip, and discussion around it can be very black and white - "...one must either be a creature of the disability, or have transcended it entirely." (King 1993:72).

Bio: Ed Clews is a documentary photographer based in York, UK, whose work explores the lives of those often overlooked in wider society. His projects seek to elevate the everyday, framing the smaller moments that transpire amongst the people he documents with a tender and considered vision of their daily lives. He recently completed a Masters in Photography at Falmouth University.

EAD Spotlight

Mariana López (University of York), Gavin Kearney (University of York)

This presentation will introduce attendees to the concept of Enhanced Audio Description (EAD) and its application to film and television productions. EAD is an alternative to traditional Audio Description (AD) developed by Mariana López and Gavin Kearney, which offers a new paradigm for accessibility to film and television for visually impaired audiences, one in which an alternative to third-person narration is presented through the use of sound design techniques, questioning the overreliance on words. The research team will explain how EAD combines sound effects, spatialisation and first person narration/description to produce accessible experiences that are a result of a close collaboration with creative teams and that embed consultation with visually impaired people.

Throughout the presentation the research team will be discussing and showcasing their latest work, including an insight on how they worked on different fiction and non-fiction projects and across different genres to make them accessible.

Bios:

Mariana J López is a Professor in Sound Production and Post Production at the University of York (UK). She is the Principal Investigator for the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project 'Enhancing Audio Description II: implementing accessible, personalised and inclusive film and television experiences for visually impaired audiences', a £1m project grant which started in November 2021. In addition to her work as a researcher, Mariana teaches modules on sound design as well as accessibility to students in a variety of creative industries degrees. She is also an active sound designer. Mariana also works in the field of acoustical heritage and historical soundscapes, her new book is titled 'Sonic Pasts: acoustical heritage and historical soundscapes' to be published by Routledge.

Gavin Kearney is a Professor of Audio Engineering at the School of Physics, Engineering and Technology at the University of York. He is an active researcher, technologist and sound designer for immersive technologies and has published over a hundred articles and patents relating to immersive audio. He obtained his PhD in audio signal processing from Trinity College Dublin in 2010 and joined the University of York in 2011. He leads a team of researchers at York Audiolab which focuses on different facets of immersive and interactive audio, including spatial audio and surround sound, real-time audio signal processing, Ambisonics and spherical acoustics, game audio / audio for virtual and augmented reality and recording and audio post-production technique development. He is also Director of CoSTAR LiveLAB, a unique R&D facility dedicated to innovation in live performance technologies.

Keynote: An Investigation of Missing Sound

Raymond Antrobus

Antrobus has described himself as an 'Investigator of Missing Sound', what does that mean to him and how might it apply to his, and potentially, our, writing lives?

Bio: Antrobus has described himself as an 'Investigator of Missing Sound', what does that mean to him and how might it apply to his, and potentially, our, writing lives? Raymond Antrobus is the author of three poetry titles: The Perseverance (Penned in the Margins), All The Names Given (Picador) and Signs, Music (Picador). Antrobus's poems have been added to GCSE syllabi, and his poetry has won the Ted Hughes Award, the Somerset Maugham Award and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award. In 2019 he became the first ever poet to be awarded the Rathbone Folio Prize for best work of literature in any genre. He is also the author of two children's picturebooks, including Can Bears Ski? (Walkers Books), which became the first story to be broadcast on the BBC entirely in British Sign Language. Antrobus is an advocate for several D/deaf charities, including Deaf Kidz International and the National Deaf Children's Society. Antrobus was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2020 and appointed an MBE in 2021.

Performance 4: It Sticks to the Ryver

Corbeau Sandoval

Written by emerging playwright Corbeau Sandoval (any/all pronouns), It Sticks to the Ryver is an experimental two-hander play centring care, radical softness, and disability justice created for, with, and by the disabled community. Throughout, we follow The Person (they/them), an overworked college student, and The Other (it/its), a playful humanoid bird, as they learn to live and (re)grow together as a world collapses around them. First showcased at the 2024 Queer Reading Series and now accepted into the DARCI conference, I have the joy of working to present a first 45-minute staged reading of the play in the UK followed by a Q&A session with key members of the production team to explore the themes of the play, the pitfalls of current accessibility practices within academia and the arts, the intersection of art and activism, and what it means to sit together in times of crisis. As Í now get to work with a full team to produce this piece in tandem with an exhibit showcasing works surround disability, we hope this one-of-a-kind opportunity will start conversations on how we create (in our own time and in tandem with others) and find ways to further expand today's artistic conversations on collaboration and art-making as world-making.

Bio: Corbeau Sandoval (any/all) is an emerging multidisciplinary performance artist of mixed identity born, raised, and based in Tiothià:ke (colonially known as Montreal). They hold the firm belief that "art-making is world-making" (Ismatu Gwendolyn) and that theatre can be a "radical space of togetherness" (Jordan Tannahill). Combining these ideas with their practice of radical softness, they aim to transform theatre into an act of community creation that consistently rediscovers the past, present, and future and designs safer spaces for people. Their original play "It Sticks to the Ryver", an exploration of living through burnout as a neurodivergent person, was featured at Centaur Theatre and Playwright's Workshop Montreal's 2024 Queer Reading Series. Having performed in several critically acclaimed and genre-bending shows including Cornflake (Dense & Stage) and Wine & Halva (Postmarginal), they continue their career through their newest script Sins of the 7th House (in development with Image+Nation's Queer Story Lab) and the upcoming short film Rage! (in production with BHRN Productions).

Paper Session 4A: Reflections on Disability Representation and Accessibility

Embodying encounters with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome and Fibromyalgia through ephemeral art in practice

Laura Jagger (Oxford Brookes University)

Historically within art, ephemeral sculptures have been made to communicate concepts of deterioration, and self-destruction, often produced with a shortened lifespan and typically not built to last. This paper will discuss my practice-led research, connecting theories of embodiment, disability gain, and crip time (from Havi Carel's Phenomenology of illness to Alison Kafer's Feminist, Queer, Crip) with a practice-based methodology. I focus on the use

of sculptural materials drawn from medical settings to acknowledge my shifting and fleeting encounter with two intertwined conditions- Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, a multisystem connective tissue disease which affects the bones, skin, blood vessels, organs, tendons, ligaments and muscles, and Fibromyalgia, a chronic widespread pain disorder. As a woman in a body modified by (in)visible disability, I use the temporal nature of latex to create material interventions that challenge societal norms, misplaced assumptions and misconceptions of disability as a loss of joy, value, independence, function, and mobility. My practice-led research reframes disability as a gain by connecting ephemeral materiality with my fleeting physical and social encounters. Specifically, I will consider how latex, perceived as an ephemeral substance, can create an elastic interface to support agency between my disabled body, a body of latex, and a body of encounter. My research leans into the animate and ephemeral qualities of untreated latex, experimenting with how the material behaves under pressure and strain. I intervene with the lifespan and form of latex until the hypermobile material becomes stiff and tears. In this way, I will show how I use latex as a sculptural material to 'think through' my physical and social encounters with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome and Fibromyalgia.

Bio: Laura Jagger is an interdisciplinary artist based in Oxford, she received her BA in Fine Art from York St John University (2021), MFA From Oxford Brookes University (2023) and is pursuing a PhD in Fine Art at Oxford Brookes University. Jagger's research-based practice is concerned with materiality which embodies and translates her exchange with the world modified by chronic illness and disability. She explores the sculptural nature of images, dissecting her encounters of pain and care, responding with materiality embodying her encounters. Jagger's research challenges ableist and patriarchal political ideology whilst navigating her artistic practice through phenomenological inquiry.

Intersectional Representations of Disability: An Interventional Framework for Reducing Stigma and Fostering Inclusion

Catalin Brylla (Bournemouth University)

This paper explores how the construction and perception of disability through intersecting social identities in media can reduce stigma and foster inclusion. Based on my recent book 'Documentary and Stereotypes: Reducing Stigma through Factual Media' (2023) and its accompanying disability toolkit for media makers, this approach maps the parasocial contact between ingroup viewers (e.g. non-disabled men) and screen characters (a disabled man) in terms of converging and diverging social identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Crisp, 2010). Targeting scholars and media practitioners, the toolkit fuses models from social psychology, disability studies and media studies to formulate three intersectional stigma reduction strategies for research, media practice and intervention:

1) 'Shared identity' highlights ingroup identity matches between viewers and characters. For example, the film Daruma (2003, Alexander Yellen) portrays two disabled men parenting a young girl, and the disability identity does not overshadow the parenthood identity. On the contrary, at times the men's disabilities appear to be incidental. This means that a

non-disabled ingroup viewer (if they have been a parent) share the identity and associated traits of parenthood with the disabled screen characters.

2) 'Common identity' fosters the perception of inclusion through depicting a superordinate ingroup identity to which both, viewer and character appear to belong to. For example, the Channel 4 promo for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics emphasises the disabled athletes but also adds a new, superordinate and common ingroup of 'human' and 'British'. The athletes are not represented as 'supercrips', who possess superhuman skills to overcome their disability. Instead, they are shown as ordinary, yet diverse, British human beings, who give birth, have breakfast, use social media and live in Victorian terraced houses.

3) 'Individual identity' represents disabled characters as unique and relatable individuals through highlighting at least five different identities (Crisp, 2010) and disclosing intimate information from their perspective. For example, Chella Man's YouTube channel uses highly intimate first-person videos that represent him as male, disabled (deaf), transgender, boyfriend, artist, Asian-American and Jewish. This makes it very hard for any viewer to categorise Man into just the disability group, thus mitigating the activation of stigmatising disability stereotypes.

Bio: Dr. Catalin Brylla is Principal Lecturer in Film and TV and Deputy Director of the Centre for the Study of Conflict, Emotion and Social Justice at Bournemouth University. His work advocates for media representations to strategically reduce the stigma for marginalized social groups, such as disabled people and African communities. He has also made documentaries about such groups, and he has researched the social impact of media. He is currently working on an AHRC-funded research project on disability and media advocacy in Tanzania, and a BA-funded project on media engagement for social wellbeing in the visually impaired community.

Four Little Corners in the Land of Many Shapes: Participation, Representation and Accessibility in the New Media Access Spectrum

Kate Dangerfield (Independent), Pablo Romero Fresco (Universidade de Vigo/University of Roehampton), Ana Tamayo (Universidad del País Vasco, UPV/EHU, Spain)

As standard media accessibility (mostly in the form of subtitles, audio description and sign language interpreting) consolidates as an essential element in society through legislation, guidelines and industry standards, new and alternative access practices are also emerging (Greco & Romero-Fresco, 2023). These new practices stress the need to approach access not as a technique or as a problem-solving issue, but from a wider perspective, looking at the absence of participation of disabled people in media access and at the stereotypical on-screen representation they often have to deal with. This presentation uses the children's story Quatre Petits Coins de Rien du Tout/Four Little Corners (Ruillier, 2004) to illustrate and unpack some of these issues. Four Little Corners tells the story of a little square who wants to go into a house to join his friends, the little circles. When it becomes clear that little square cannot get in the house, his friends find a solution for him. Drawing from (critical) disability

studies, media accessibility, and the emerging field of accessibility studies, the story reflects well intentioned, yet discriminatory attitudes that underpin certain perspectives on diversity and inclusion. In this presentation we introduce an adaptation, a short animation film Four Little Corners in the Land of Many Shapes, where a stack of squares take the little shapes to a place they have not been before. We reflect on what this could mean in the fields of media access and audiovisual translation and discuss what constitutes alternative practices that expand the media access spectrum to include standard and alternative approaches. From this perspective, access is integrated (considered from inception), generative (facilitating an experience that challenges traditional views of compensation), flexible (not following strict guidelines), subjective (showing a point of view), creative (exploring different forms of creativity, and/or politically motivated. We specifically focus on accessible filmmaking as a methodology that 'folds from the outside in' (Branson, 2023), and notions of access as conversation (a collaborative endeavour made by disabled and non-disabled people from the beginning) (Romero-Fresco & Dangerfield, 2022). The adaptation is important here because it can be used as a tool to show the subtle ways ableism is ingrained in society and creates an opportunity to reflect on some of our own biases.

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Bios:

Kate is an independent researcher, and freelance filmmaker and accessibility consultant. She is a member of the GALMA research group. Kate has lectured at the University of Roehampton and the University of Herefordshire on new trends in translation and the media, and accessible filmmaking. Her freelance positions include the SMART (Shaping Multilingual Access through Respeaking Technology); the project 'Sensory Microphone: Les Handicapes Kaddu/The Disabled Voice'; the co-creation theatre R&D project 'The Call' and other accessible filmmaking projects with MaMoMi for the '91-Divoc'exhibition; and a workshop to develop the play 'Distopias'. Kate is passionate about challenging the disabling barriers that currently exist within society and finding ways to bring people's voices to the fore in a non-disabled world.

Pablo is the author of the books Subtitling through Speech Recognition (Routledge) and Accessible Filmmaking (Routledge). He leads the international research group GALMA and has worked as a consultant for the European Parliament, Ofcom, Netflix or the Spanish Film Academy, with which he has set up a training course to introduce accessible filmmaking and (media) access coordination in the Spanish film industry. Pablo is also a filmmaker. His first short documentary, Joining the Dots (2012), was used by film schools, universities and film festivals to raise awareness about audio description. His first feature-length documentary, Where Memory Ends (2022), premiered at the London Spanish Film Festival. In 2024 he

was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the international subtitlers' association SUBTLE for his lifelong impact on the areas of audiovisual translation and media accessibility around the world.

Ana is an Associate Professor at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). Currently, she is a member of the research groups TRALIMA/ITZULIK (GIU21/060, UPV/EHU) and collaborates with TRAMA (Universitat Jaume I) and GALMA (Universidade de Vigo). Her research interests focus on audiovisual translation and accessibility in different modalities. She is especially interested in contributing to the research on media accessibility and minoritized languages, mostly Basque and Sign Language(s).

The Urban Nature Project: Evaluation of co-creation workshops with young blind adults

Rachel Hutchinson (University of Westminster), Harriet Fink (Natural History Museum)

In summer 2024, the Natural History Museum opened its redeveloped gardens, offering visitors a haven in the centre of London where they can encounter wildlife and experience stories of evolution and geological change. The re-opening of the gardens presented an exciting opportunity to co-create innovative and inclusive interpretation to enhance future visitors' experiences of the gardens. The Urban Nature Project (UNP) team worked with local blind and partially blind young people to co-create poems that would feature in the new audio guide for the gardens. While the poems themselves were not intended to function as stand-alone audio descriptions, the process of co-creating them drew on innovative new ways of thinking about audio description and its creation. Dr Alison Eardley (University of Westminster) and her collaborators have developed the W-ICAD model: Workshop for Inclusive Co-created Audio Description. The W-ICAD model brings blind, partially blind and sighted people together to explore museum artifacts, and their responses form the basis for a creative audio description. W-ICAD is centred on the principle that all experiences are equally valid, and it foregrounds the importance of sensory exploration. The co-creation workshops for the UNP drew on the principles of W-ICAD. Five young adults engaged in sensory exploration of objects relating to the following themes: soil, rocks, geological time and fossils, evolution and adaptation. The young people worked with a spoken word artist, an access specialist, museum scientists and the UNP team to co-create poems that drew on their subjective, sensory experiences. The final poems provide an innovative, sensory-based exploration of themes and objects relating to the Garden; to be used and enjoyed by all visitors. This talk presents an evaluation of this project and will reflect on the role of Audio Description techniques in developing inclusive interpretation.

Bios:

Rachel Hutchinson is a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Westminster. Rachel's research applies understanding of autobiographical and episodic memory to the evaluation of cultural engagement and experience. She has a particular interest in Audio Description, and her work on Audio Description has considered museums, television and theatre. Her PhD explored the potential of Audio Description as a form of inclusive interpretation in

museums. Rachel is an interdisciplinary researcher whose published work spans Psychology, Museum Studies, Audio Visual Translation and Critical Disability Studies.

Harriet Fink is Public Programmes and Collections' Manger at Watford Museum and formerly the Learning and Volunteering Programme Manager for the Urban Nature Project at the Natural History Museum. Her work spans creative, cultural and environmental engagement with a particular focus on inclusive involvement practice and co-creation.

Paper Session 4B: Accessibility in Live Performances

Access expansively conceived: Mechanical ventilation and scenographic access in Cripping Breath

Grace Joseph (University of Sheffield), Kirsty Liddiard (University of Sheffield), Jamie Hale (University of Sheffield; CRIPtic Arts), Louise Atkinson (University of Sheffield)

 In this paper, members of the Arts Stream of Cripping Breath wonder about including the performer's life-sustaining technologies—namely, breathing support—in the aesthetics of performance. 'Cripping Breath: Towards a new cultural politics of respiration' is a five-year interdisciplinary programme of research funded by a Wellcome Trust Discovery Award. Within the Arts Stream, we are collaborating with artists who use ventilation to develop both visual art and live performance practices. Here, our central question is: How might the methods, structures, and materials of access—captions, audio description, and sign language interpretation—intersect with medical technologies? We aim to reconceptualise access in visual art and live performance as inextricable from disability representation and lived experience. So doing, we propose a scenographic access, which extends access—conventionally conceived as supplementing the communicational apparatus of the theatre and sensorial experience in the gallery—towards encompassing a network of human and nonhuman support and a range of technologies. By bringing scholarship from theatre and performance and visual art into dialogue with critical disability studies, we articulate the ways that centring disabled experience might introduce other aesthetic components—costume, for instance—into a 'web model' of access (Sandahl 2002). Our secondary aim is to suggest that the incorporation of other aesthetic elements into discussions about access will enrich this area of practice. We connect Rachel Hann's (2023) assertion that the 'techniques and cultural frames of costume change, transform, or irritate felt relationships between humans, nonhumans, and everything in-between' with a conception of assemblage specific to posthuman disability studies. This brings multiple human and technological actors into our analysis of access; we theorise the aesthetic representation of support workers (Calvert 2020) and medical technologies alongside access 'tools' such as audio description and captions. Together, we wonder what the perception—the seeing, hearing, and touching—of these 'body extensions' (Horn) and complex assemblages might do, onstage and in the gallery.

Bios:

Grace Joseph is a theatre director, access worker, and Research Associate on Cripping Breath, based at the University of Sheffield. She has recently completed her PhD in the Department of Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her practice-based project, shaped by ongoing collaborations with disabled-led theatre companies, interrogates the aesthetics of access in both rehearsal and performance. Grace has taught at Central School of Speech and Drama, Drama Studio London, the University of Greenwich, and at Goldsmiths. She is on the editorial board of the postgraduate journal Platform, and coedited Gatherings, an accessible audio and text issue of the journal (platform-gatherings.com). As a theatre director, she has trained at the Young Vic, worked at Shakespeare's Globe and Hampstead Theatre, and developed new writing with Camden People's Theatre and Battersea Arts Centre. She also has a Level 3 in British Sign Language, awarded by Signature.

Kirsty Liddiard is a feminist disability studies scholar and disabled researcher whose co-produced research centres on lived experience, emotion and embodiment as core axes through which to understand the everyday lives of disabled people and their families. She is currently a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Education and iHuman at the University of Sheffield. She is the author of The Intimate Lives of Disabled People (2018, Routledge) and the co-editor of The Palgrave Handbook of Disabled Children's Childhood Studies (2018, Palgrave). She is also co-editor of Being Human in Covid-19 (2022, Bristol University Press) and a co-author of Living Life to the Fullest: Youth, Disability and Voice (2022, Emerald). Her current project, Cripping Breath: Towards a new cultural politics of respiration, funded by a Wellcome Discovery Award, explores the lives of people who have had their lives saved or sustained by ventilatory medical technologies. For more, see: www.sheffield.ac.uk/cripping-breath

Jamie Hale is a writer, performer, and director who uses non-invasive ventilation. They make work across poetry, essay, theatre, and television that grapples with impairment, disability, the inevitable presence of mortality, and the urgency that brings to one's engagement with the world. Jamie is the founder and Artistic Director of the award-winning CRIPtic Arts, which develops work with and by disabled creatives, and centres creative accessibility. Jamie was awarded the Evening Standard Future Theatre Fund Director/Theatremaker of the Year award in 2021 for their first play, NOT DYING, which was staged at the Lyric Hammersmith, Barbican Centre, and HOME Manchester. Their second, I Want To Live (2022), was staged at Theatre Royal Stratford East. Jamie was a 2021-22 Jerwood Poetry Fellow, and their first poetry pamphlet, Shield, was published to critical acclaim in January 2021. They are also the founder and one of the judges of the Disabled Poets' Prize.

Dr Louise Atkinson is a visual artist, researcher, and facilitator. Alongside her role as Artist-in-Residence with Cripping Breath, she is a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Leeds. Her practice explores the relationship between art and ethnography, often incorporating co-production and co-curation processes. Previous projects include: No One Is An Island (2023), an AR map produced with refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in response to the Shifting Borders exhibition at Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery; Multilingual Streets (2019-2021), which used visual art and photography to respond to the visible languages on the street with multilingual pupils in Manchester; and Family Narratives of Being German in Yorkshire (2018), a large-format, digital artwork based on documents,

objects, and conversations with German expatriates and their descendants in Yorkshire. Louise is founder and co-Director of The Highrise Project CIC, an organisation committed to supporting marginalised communities in Leeds through art and digital inclusion.

Dancing on and with Audio Description: From Access Fatigue to Access Aesthetics and Access Intimacy

Leni Van Goidsenhoven (University of Amsterdam)

Disability, unlike race, class and gender, escaped for a long time serious investigation in the performance arts (Sandahl 2018). What is more, accessibility in the performance arts is mainly linked to entrance issues of visitors and 'add-on' modalities (i.e. hearing devices, audio description, sign-language interpretation), and is more often than not only an afterthought— if it is considered at all. More recently, accessibility has been at the heart of massive regulatory policy processes, however, these policies are approaching access in a procedural way (e.g. access is an end goal one can reach by ticking boxes) and have produced again new and unacknowledged challenges for the project of disability justice (Hamraie 2017). This is not only exacerbating feelings of exclusion and unbelonging but is also feeding into 'access fatigue' (Konrad 2021) among disability communities.
The above shows that access is critical, both in the sense of its urgency and in the need for critique – after all, the concept has received little theoretical, philosophical and methodological attention (Greco 2022; Chandler et al. 2023; Price 2024). What would happen if we approach accessibility not in a procedural way, but as a relational, intimate and creative process? Can the arts, for instance, support in conceptualizing accessibility differently? During this presentation, I aim to experiment with rethinking and politicizing access through a dance performance. I centre the body-world material engagements of the relaxed dance performance Isomo II (2023, created in Belgium by Iris Bouche, danced by Hernán Mancebo, Saïd Gharbi en Anya Senognoeva). The performance experimented with Participatory Audio Description as a dramaturgical tool during the creative process and used audio description live on stage as a soundtrack while dancing. In other words, access is made part of the creative process and is integrated into the performance aesthetics (Johnson 2022). The audio description, furthermore, aimed not to give a mere 'objective description' but by drawing on the 'politics of knowing-making' (Hamraie 2017) and 'crip technoscience' (Hamraie et al. 2019; Sheppard 2019) it aimed towards creating an aesthetic experience of its own and it materialized and resounded what happens when conventions of monolingualism are abandoned. In doing a diffractive analysis by focusing on the PAD as a dramaturgical tool (creative process) and as an aesthetics of itself (vignettes of the performance), alongside the audience experiences shared through focus groups and theoretical insights of crip-technoscience, I engage with the following questions: How can we rethink and politicize accessibility through the dance performance? How might it support us in transitioning from access fatigue to access aesthetics and even access intimacy? And how does this serve disability justice? This presentation is embedded within a larger project that understands access as "a politics of wonder" (Titchkosky 2011; Price 2024) and aims to hold accessibility's promises of inclusion in tension with what Donna Haraway calls "non-innocence," that even while technologies and material forms may promise justice or

equity, their entanglement with systems of discrimination and domination also demand different forms of accountability (Hamraie 2017).

Bio: Leni Van Goidsenhoven (she/her) is Assistant Professor of Critical Disability Studies at the Department of Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands) and visiting professor of critical disability studies at Gent University (Belgium) . Van Goidsenhoven's research focuses on disability,illness, neurodiversity, inclusive learning environments, and non-normative bodyminds in the arts and literature. She has a special interest in reconceptualizing voice, the importance of integrating lived experiences in research, and accessibility aesthetics. She published in international journals such as Choreographic Practices (on cripping choreography), Qualitative Inquiry, Qualitative Research, Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research, Choreographic Practices and Frontiers of Psychiatry. She is the author of two books, Autisme in veelvoud (Garant, 2020) and OnGehoord (Epo,2021), and the 'What Are You Reading' editor for DiGeSt - Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies. She also works as a curator regularly, both for theatre houses and museums.

Beyond Compliancy: Cultivating Access Intimacy and Amongst Theatre Audiences Through Accessible Practices

Bethany Schaufler-Biback (University of Toronto)

In an era where theatre practitioners are striving to make accessible practices more than an afterthought, what does it mean to create spaces where disabled audiences feel truly understood– not only accommodated, but intimately seen? While discussions on accessibility have gained traction in Canadian theatre over the past decade (LaMarre, Andrea, & Besse), many accessibility practices remain rooted in what artist and scholar Alice Sheppard terms "compliancy thinking" (00:14:12). These are approaches that conceive disability as a problem to "solve" through surface-level interventions, often tacked onto the end of a project. When approaching accessibility practices for theatre audiences, there is an interplay of imaginaries which influence the implementation of accessible practices– the imaginary of the audience role, desired experience, and most importantly, the imaginary held of which disabilities are being considered by these practices. Each of these imaginaries are reliant on the relational dynamics within and amongst audience collectives. This paper aims to explore these relational imaginaries through the frame of disability studies writer Mia Mingus' notion of "access intimacy" which describes the elusive feelings which become when one's access needs are deeply understood by another (Access Intimacy). Much like other theorizations of intimacy from nightclubs (Garcia-Mispireta) to participatory performance (Jacobson & Schaufler-Biback), Mingus emphasizes the presence of intimacy brought upon by and between strangers. This facet makes its exploration imperative between audience members during theatre performance. Placing The Disability Collective's D/deaf shadow cast production of The Rocky Horror Picture Show as a case study in conversation with affect theory, audience studies, and disability studies, this paper asks: how do certain representations of theatre audience accessibility practices cultivate access intimacy amongst audience collectives during live performance? In doing so, it offers theatre

practitioners integral insight on how their accessibility practices may better serve their communities by emphasizing the feelings and experiences of disability.

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Bio: Bethany Schaufler-Biback (she/her) is a PhD student at the University of Toronto's Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. Bethany's research lives within the realm of audience studies, concerning the intersections of audience care, affect, and disability studies. As a theatre practitioner, Bethany's specialties include stage management, production management, technical direction, and accessibility coordination. She has had the opportunity to work internationally, most recently as a stage manager at Achura Karpra in Bogotá, Colombia.

A Meta-Analysis of Accessible Practices in Toronto Theatres in 2024

Willow Martin (University of Toronto CDTPS)

As the conversation surrounding Accessible Practice in performance progresses, or pointedly ceases to progress: trends continue to emerge surrounding which narratives, viewpoints, and needs are placed in positions of primacy, and which become sub-dominant or entirely obscured. Through an analysis of documentation, resources, and logistical data, this paper performs a Meta-Analysis of Accessible Practices in Toronto Theatres in 2025. By establishing the accessibility cultures of Toronto Theatres, and subsequently placing them in conversation with one another, we can begin to view a more robust picture of the state of accessibility in Toronto performance culture. Using the knowledge acquired during this study, this paper will derive findings concerning social, political, and cultural systems as well as histories which have influenced the trajectory of Toronto's accessibility culture. This paper is conceived as a direct result of personal and second hand experience with Toronto's performance institutions, and the lack of accessibility practices which are sorely needed in these spaces. As a result of Toronto's theatrical and sociocultural history, theatrical spaces throughout the city take vastly different stances on how they produce art and perform business. This history has established a culture of individualism, as well as isolation between these institutions: resulting in a fragmentation of discourse and discussion. Conversations surrounding accessibility progress at drastically different speeds within these various

institutions, find unique sticking points, and broach entirely different needs depending on their context. This paper intends to connect and place these perspectives in conversation with one another, revealing a truer picture of Accessible Practices in Toronto Theatres in 2024, through the performance of a Meta-Theatrical analysis of these diverse traditions and their trajectories, in order to re-center sub-dominant, and obscured narratives, viewpoints, and needs as part of the conversation. Thereby, renegotiating Access from an individual conversation, to an intercommunal one: centering an intersectional, and interdependent culture which better serves a diverse community of audiences, as well as creatives.

Bio: Willow Martin (She/They) is an MA student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. Willow's research approaches questions of accessibility as intersects with identity and sociocultural context as defined through each phase of theatrical practice. Concerning the implementation of historical and cultural practice as interfaces with contemporary access strategies, she endeavours to dismantle systemic inequities, and facilitate conversation as well as creation surrounding more just structures: addressing audience, performer, creative, as well as infrastructural and cultural elements. In addition to her work as a student, Willow is a theatre practitioner, working in capacity as playwright, performer, producer, dramaturg, and accessibility coordinator.

Break a leg! Uruguay: Inclusive Performing Arts. Contributions for the training of university students into the communication of an accessible cultural project.

Florencia Fascioli Álvarez (Universidad Católica del Uruguay), María Laura Rocha (Universidad Católica del Uruguay)

Inclusion in the performing arts has navigated an interesting path, proposing research and a hands-on approach both on stage and behind the scenes (Hadley & McDonald, 2019). This exploration has expanded into the area of accessibility, becoming an additional component of the artistic proposal (Fryer & Cavallo, 2022). Break a leg! Uruguay (BLU) supports this movement toward building a more sustainable and diverse field of performing arts. BLU is an inclusive scenic arts project where directors from different countries (Portugal, Spain, Uruguay) work alongside a cast of artists with and without disabilities. Its aim is to democratize cultural access through training and research focused on performing arts and cultural accessibility. Throughout 2023, several phases were carried out: a two-week laboratory for scenic research held by artist exploring different theatre techniques resulting in a theatrical piece. At the same time a training course was developed with university students. The laboratory and the play created by the participants integrated accessibility (audio description and Uruguayan sign language) into the artistic proposal. Meanwhile, in the training course, students with and without disabilities from various degrees (communications, scenic arts, visual arts) from the Universidad Católica del Uruguay worked on making the project's communication content accessible. This involved creating an inclusive graphic identity, producing accessible audiovisual content and webinars, managing the project's social media and website. This presentation will review the different stages of the project, with a special focus on the training course, its learning outcomes, methodology, content, and planned activities. It was an opportunity for students to work on aspects such as

representation, participation, and the production of accessible communication. At the same time, being involved in a tangible project provided a chance for critical reflection on cultural access for the entire population.

Link: https://breakaleguruguay.webflow.io/

References: https://shorturl.at/B3sYj

Possible topics
- Accessibility in different cultural contexts
- Immersive experiences and Inclusion
- Including end users and audiences in research and development projects
- Integrated access/accessible filmmaking
- Representation of disability in the creative industries, including all roles in the creative industries

Bios:

Florencia Fascioli Álvarez is a PhD student at Universidade de Vigo (Galicia, Spain). She holds a master's degree in Audiovisual Translation from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a Communication degree from the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She has been working as a freelance audiovisual editor since 2002 as well as a cinema and theatre audio describer since 2010. She currently works as a Full-Time Professor in the Department of Humanities and Communication at the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She is a member of the Núcleo Interdisciplinario Comunicación y Accesibilidad (NICA) at the Universidad de la República (Uruguay). From these institutional frameworks, she has promoted numerous projects on cultural accessibility, trained in access modalities, and advised public agencies and private companies on the development of regulations, norms, and projects related to this topic.

María Laura Rocha is a PhD student in communication at Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She holds a master's degree in Television, Film, and Transmedia Narratives from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a Communication degree from the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She works as a Full-Time Professor in the Department of Humanities and Communication at the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. Her research focuses on film and gender equality, and transmedia audiovisual narratives.

Panel 5: The Workshop for Inclusive Co-created Audio Description (W-ICAD): an anti-ableist approach to Audio Description

Alison Eardley (University of Westminster), Lindsay Bywood (University of Westminster), Joseph Rizzo Naudi (Royal Holloway, University of London), Samuel Goldstone-Brady (National Paralympic Heritage Trust)

This panel will discuss the 'Workshop for Inclusive Co-created Audio Description', a newly developed tool that transforms the way in which museums and heritage organisations think about audio description. W-ICAD re-shapes museum audio interpretation by challenging three key implicit biases that underpin current AD practice within the museum sector (and beyond).

- 'experience' through sight is objective;
- AD is only beneficial to blind or partially blind people; and
- full sight provides people with a privileged experience of visual arts, and therefore sighted people must do the describing for blind and partially blind listeners.

W-ICAD draws on psychology and neuroscience to redefine how museum AD is created, who it is for, and who does the describing. The model provides museums with a new, equitable and inclusive way to co-create audio description. Description is led by partially blind co-creators, in collaboration with blind and sighted co-creators. The subjectivity and positionality of the describers is embraced, and descriptions are created equally for blind, partially blind, and sighted audiences.

Bios:

Alison F. Eardley, Ph.D., is Reader in Psychology, Cultural Heritage and Inclusion at the University of Westminster. Her work applies a cognitive lens to visitor experience and audience engagement in museums and the cultural sector, with a focus on access and inclusion. Her interdisciplinary mixed methods approach has contributed to the development of museum practice and scholarship in the fields of museum studies, psychology, translation studies and disability studies. She led the development of the W-ICAD model (Workshop for Inclusive Co-created Audio Description) and leads the communication strand of the Sensational Museum project https://sensationalmuseum.org/. She was a Fulbright-Smithsonian Scholar (2021–2022), working at the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum.

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Lindsay Bywood is a Translation Studies academic, trainer, and practitioner and the research fellow on the W-ICAD project. She has delivered in-person training to over 12 museums and has developed the online training course. After a BA in German and Philosophy and an MA in Translation Studies she trained as a subtitler and spent many years working in various roles in the subtitling and dubbing industry. She has a PhD in subtitling from University College, London, and teaches translation, audiovisual translation, project management, and professional development for translators at various levels. Her recent research has centred around inclusive co-created audio description in museums, and other research interests include subtitling and machine translation and inclusive design.

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Joseph Rizzo Naudi is a partially blind writer, facilitator and postgraduate researcher. He has experience of both participating in W-ICAD workshops and implementing adapted forms of the model. Drawing on his experience as an AD writer and a partially blind AD user, he brings important insights into the potential of the model as creative practice. He has worked as a writer, facilitator and consultant on artwork description projects at APT Gallery, Hypha Studios, Tower Bridge, the National Gallery and Wellcome Collection, among others. He is an AHRC-funded postgraduate researcher at Royal Holloway (lead supervisor: Prof. Hannah Thompson), where he is investigating fiction, artwork description and the creative potential of blindness. He has an MA in Creative & Life Writing from Goldsmiths College. Forthcoming publications include a chapter of his fiction writing in Beyond The Visual: Multisensory Modes of Beholding Art (eds Ken Wilder and Aaron McPeake, UCL Press).

Samuel Goldstone-Brady currently works as the Collections Engagement Officer for the National Paralympic Heritage Trust. He has created a number of physical and virtual exhibitions for the museum, which have employed W-ICAD to generate audio-descriptions. He was an AHRC CDP PhD student at the University of Glasgow and the National Paralympic Heritage Trust. His PhD research explored the social, political and technological history of sporting wheelchairs, and his thesis was submitted in December 2023. Samuel is also a co-founder of the UK Disability History and Heritage Hub, set up following the Invisible & Under-Represented? Disability History, Objects & Heritage conference. His research interests are in Disability History, with particular interest in technology, sport, politics, and intersections with Jewish and African American history.

Paper Session 5: Careers in the Creative Industries: professional roles, barriers and opportunities

'To get back to the simple idea that I am a professional actor': the complexities of navigating (in)accessibility as disabled performers working in UK theatre and television

Jessi Parrott (Independent)

The hope in this paper's title, of 'simple' professional recognition, is one of many similar sentiments shared by deaf, disabled and neurodivergent performer participants during research for my PhD. It was expressed in contrast to the relief and creative freedom that comes from accessibility requirements being met – and how this is frequently not so simple. This paper discusses generously offered interview data from my thesis, which interrogated the link between which stories get told about disability and impairment in theatre and television and who gets to tell those stories. It is also informed by subsequent work, including focus groups and interviews during the project "Always the Audience (Never the Star)" (Parrott and Hale, 2024) conducted with CRIPtic Arts. ATA explored the experiences of performers with specific physical accessibility requirements: those needing care and/or support to work, users of hoist-adapted or Changing Places toilets, and users of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). This paper therefore explicitly positions disability and impairment as employment issues within the UK creative industries,

before and since the advent of Covid-19. Through a comparative analysis and critique of the state of the theatre and television sectors, it examines how deaf, disabled and neurodivergent performers navigate the creative problems and possibilities posed by (in)accessibility in our careers. Furthermore, whilst not autoethnographic, my research interests are grounded in my own experiences as a queer and non-binary trans performer who is autistic and a non-ambulatory powered wheelchair user. Consequently, the discussion also seeks to honour the multiple marginalisations experienced by many of the participants referenced throughout. It emphasises how gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class intersect and interact with disability and impairment – particularly in terms of casting decisions and whether or not performers are accepted as 'wieldy symbols' (Dean, 2007, 262) for the (re)presentation of narratives.

Bio: Dr Jessi Parrott (they/them) is an independent scholar based in London. They received their PhD, titled "Rolling the Boards: the interplay of representation and recruitment in disability casting conventions in UK theatre and television" from the University of Warwick in 2019, co-supervised between the School of Theatre and Performance Studies and Warwick Business School. Since then, they have been working in a freelance capacity. Their creative practice is multidisciplinary, as a performer, playwright and poet, with a particular interest in the intersections of disabled, neurodivergent, queer and trans identities, and in collaborating with other multiply marginalised artists. They balance this with research, training and consultancy around employment, representation, equity and accessibility in the arts, supporting organisations to improve their policies and processes. They are also continuing to progress in their own research. In all their work, they are committed to holding space for people to share experiences and stories.

(Dis)Ableism: A Physiological, Social and Cultural Examination of Disability Studies and Music Production

Matt Shuttleworth (University of York)

In the academic and vocational fields of music production, there appears to be a lack of representation of physically disabled audio engineers and producers. When disabilities are represented, they tend to focus on blindness or visual impairments. This highlights a significant research gap in understanding individuals with other impairments, such as those with motor disabilities. This presentation will begin to address this research gap by examining the barriers faced by individuals with physical disabilities that hinder their entry into and progression within the field of music production. This will be accomplished by reviewing existing literature and primary data collected by the researcher in 2022. The presentation will concentrate on three key areas of interest: physiology and physical requirements, access to education, and the accessibility of production software, employing qualitative methods to explore the lived experiences of international audio engineers and music producers with motor disabilities. The data presented will provide insights into the realities of working as a disabled audio engineer or music producer and focus on the entry barriers. It will illuminate the complexities of physical and physiological disabilities within the music technology industry and highlight some of the mixed responses from employers regarding these individuals, clearly indicating that the industry has yet to fully grasp the Social Model of Disability, which looks beyond the limitations of the individual. While some individuals succeed in the industry due to their personal motivation, passion, and

determination, the research presented suggests that additional opportunities for technological improvements and simple workarounds could enhance access and inclusion. The presentation will culminate by offering recommendations for where further investigations could occur to benefit aspiring disabled audio engineers, producers, and the wider music industry.

Bio: Matt Shuttleworth is currently pursuing a PhD in Music (AHRC funded through the White Rose College of the Arts and Humanities [WRoCAH]) at the University of York, examining how hardware and software used in music production can be made more accessible to individuals with motor disabilities. This research is inspired by his own lived experience as a disabled multi-instrumentalist and producer. Matt's research interests include music production and disability studies. Matt began his journey at the University in 2021, where he pursued a master's in music production. He has spent the intervening years working as a music technician and lecturing in theology and music at the London School of Theology, where his undergraduate thesis is listed as core reading on their BA pathway. He recently co-authored an article on music and spirituality published in Religions in July 2024. Outside of academia, Matt often enjoys getting trapped in the local cemetery.

Access Coordination: Processes, Roles, and Tools in Educational and Professional Audiovisual Contexts

Leticia Lorier López (Universidad de la República, Universidade de Vigo), Florencia Fascioli Álvarez (Universidad Católica del Uruguay, Universidade de Vigo)

Access Coordination is an emerging role within the film industry, primarily aimed at promoting the participation and representation of people with disabilities, including Deaf and neurodivergent individuals, in filmmaking (Screen Australia, 2023; Screen Skills, 2024). Within Media Accessibility (MA), specific profiles for translation and accessibility coordination have been developed, focusing on enabling access to audiovisual content (Udo & Fels, 2010; Branson, 2019; Romero Fresco, 2019). Recent training proposals have reached both perspectives for this role (Romero Fresco, 2024). This presentation will adopt a case study approach (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013) to describe the processes, roles, and tools developed for the accessibility coordination across several educational and professional projects in Uruguay. In the professional context, it examines the coordination of a team comprising MA experts, both with and without disabilities, focusing on practices and documentation for a coherent integration of accessibility within the audiovisual piece. In the educational context, it explores a university co-creation laboratory (Tancredi et al., 2022) that implements a "holistic approach to accessibility" (Rusler, 2022, p. 69) in audiovisual media. Firstly, the presentation will identify new characteristics of the access coordinator's role. Secondly, it will outline the workflow involved in creating accessible versions of six short films, a feature film, and an eight episode series. This study aims to highlight strengths, opportunities, and challenges within these contexts, offering insights that may contribute to the definition of an access coordination profile for higher education and film industry environments.

References: Google Doc

Bios:

Leticia Lorier is a PhD student in the Communication Programme at Universidade de Vigo (Spain). She has postgraduate studies in Cultural Accessibility, Language and Culture, and Literary Translation. She holds a Communication degree from the Universidad de la República (Udelar, Uruguay). She is a professor at the Information and Communication Faculty (Udelar). She co-coordinate the Interdisciplinary Nucleus on Accessibility and Communication (Udelar).

Florencia Fascioli Álvarez is a PhD student at Universidade de Vigo (Galicia, Spain). She holds a master's degree in Audiovisual Translation from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a Communication degree from the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She has been working as a freelance audiovisual editor since 2002 as well as a cinema and theatre audio describer since 2010. She currently works as a Full-Time Professor in the Department of Humanities and Communication at the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She is a member of the Núcleo Interdisciplinario Comunicación y Accesibilidad (NICA) at the Universidad de la República (Uruguay).

Rethinking Accessibility: Exploring Definitions and Conceptualizations of Accessibility from Users, Makers, and User-Makers

Anna Jankowska (University of Antwerp), Nina Reviers (University of Antwerp), Gert Vercauteren (University of Antwerp)

Accessibility is often assumed to be universally understood and inherently beneficial. Yet, accessibility standards can miss the nuanced, lived experiences of those directly engaged with access. This study explores how access is defined and conceptualized by three groups: accessibility users, makers (those creating accessible solutions), and individuals who bridge these worlds by being both users and makers. Focusing on access to culture and using thematic analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this research illuminates the diverse interpretations and expectations surrounding accessibility. Without focusing on any one access service, the research embraces a broad understanding of access, capturing its many dimensions. It contributes to Accessibility Studies by mapping this complex terrain from varied perspectives, identifying commonalities and points of tension that impact accessibility efforts, including issues of collaboration and co-creation. Grounding accessibility in the real experiences of users, makers, and user-makers, this study calls for a more holistic understanding—one that balances standardized approaches with the evolving needs of those relying on accessible solutions.

Bios:

Anna Jankowska, media accessibility researcher and trainer, is a research professor at the University of Antwerp and a lecturer at Jagiellonian University. She co-manages the OPEN Expertise Centre for Accessible Media and Culture and serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Audiovisual Translation.

Nina Reviers is a researcher and educator in Audiovisual Translation, specializing in Media Accessibility with a focus on Audio Description for blind and visually impaired audiences. Guided by Universal Design and interdisciplinarity, her inclusive research spans linguistic and multimodal aspects of audio description, computer-aided translation, and integrated access for scenic arts. She also explores accessibility technologies and the complexity of translations as dynamic phenomena. A strong advocate for stakeholder collaboration, Nina incorporates practical insights into her research and teaching, building partnerships with industry and community. Through the OPEN Expertise Centre for Accessible Media and Culture, she connects academia with the professional field, contributing to an inclusive society that embraces accessible media and culture.

Gert Vercauteren is a professor at the University of Antwerp, specializes in media accessibility, focusing on audio description (AD) for film and television. His research explores how narratological principles help prioritize narrative elements in AD, examining both visual and auditory components and their impact on audience understanding and cognitive load.

Translation challenges in the European Union: Inclusive and accessible practices in the age of automation

Sara García Fernández (Universidad de Salamanca)

In recent years, the different institutions and bodies that make up the European Union have adopted different inclusive strategies that focus, among other goals, on promoting accessibility at all levels: physical, sensory and cognitive. The latter refers to the right of people with intellectual disabilities to be informed and to access all types of content, news and data that may be of interest to them. To this end, the use of new communication methods and tools is encouraged, such as translation into easy-to-read language. In parallel, along the last decades, the European institutions have made major and increasing efforts in fostering inclusive approaches to language, resulting in the growing use, support and spread of more respectful terms and expressions, among other practices. However, from a translation perspective, one might wonder to what extent such inclusive and accessibility initiatives, as well as their dissemination, are favoured or hindered by the progressive digitisation of translation processes in European institutions. The aim of our paper is to explore the interplay between these trends and to determine the potential benefits, risks and challenges they pose for each other. For this purpose, we shall draw on studies in (institutional) translation, disability inclusion and accessibility, and new technologies in translation to assemble the theoretical framework for our research. We will then examine some translation samples into Spanish produced by different machine translation software from contents in English, taken from the European easy-to-read magazine Europe for us. Comparing these translations with the official ones published in the magazine's website, we shall expose both the main challenges and barriers and the most outstanding benefits and advances that the increasing automation of translation practices entails for the inclusive and accessible communication and dissemination of content in multilingual and multicultural environments such as the European Union.

Bio: Sara García Fernández holds a degree in Translation and Interpreting from the University of Salamanca, where she also studied her Master's degree in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language. She graduated with honours in both degrees. Subsequently, she obtained a second Master's degree in Hispanic Philology at the University of South Bohemia (Czech Republic). She is currently a predoctoral fellow at the School of Translation and

Panel 6: Training Audio Describers: An Industry-Centred Approach

Melissa Hope (Descriptive Video Works), Colleen Connor (Audio Description Training Retreats), Liz Gutman (International Digital Center)

As more diverse stories are being told on television, in movies, and on streaming services, more diverse describers are also needed to create AD that is culturally competent and truly reflects the communities that are being served. Our industry-wide challenge is to identify potential describers from under-represented populations and get them trained to produce quality audio description. In addition, one of the observations from our industry-facing people is that audio describers emerging from current trainings in North America are often trained broadly, but are not necessarily ready to work in any one sector. The trainings often cover description for theatre, for museums, and for prerecorded media all in one course, and they don't include how to use the software required by certain clients or the different guidelines that different companies have. Though a writer may have a certificate from a training, companies have to invest additional time in education after hiring newer writers, and if they don't have time for that, potentially good writers might be turned away and get discouraged. If we are going to increase the diversity of the audio description industry, we need to make sure that new writers are trained to what the industry needs and are ready to work.These challenges will need to be met by collaborative approaches. We have created training programs that are customized to the current needs of the audio description industry by bringing together different parts of the industry. Our approach has been for experienced audio description writers and teachers to create training program specifically geared towards a specific client, using their AD guidelines, prioritizing their types of projects, finding writers with the life experiences and backgrounds needed for their projects, and sometimes using their software. Liz from IDC created a custom beginner's course for a film festival, who provided the students who then went on to describe short films for the festival. Colleen from ADTR created a custom "novice-to-professional" course for a major purchaser of audio description. Melissa from DVW and Liz from IDC then hired the students from these courses and helped them transition from students to professionals. Between all of us, we've run three of these industry-led courses, and a fourth one is underway right now, and we have been learning and refining as we go. We would like to present our approach and our learnings to the larger industry and to academics within the audio description space in the hopes that others can build on this program. We envision this to be a panel where we each present the parts of the training that we led and what worked and what didn't, followed by a lively discussion with the audience about how this can be expanded and improved to help our whole industry.

Bios:

Melissa Hope (she/her) is the Client Services Manager of Descriptive Video Works, an accessibility company based in Vancouver, Canada. Melissa was named one of the top 100 most influential people in localization by the Entertainment Globalization Association. She has worked in client services, project management, quality control, writing, and more. Melissa fell in love with Audio Description (AD) after watching the Netflix series "GLOW" while recovering from a retinal detachment, which required Melissa to lay on her side with her eyes closed for five days. Two years later, on her first day of work at Descriptive Video Works, she heard the AD of the last season of "GLOW" being recorded, and it felt like a full circle moment. Melissa is also an instructor for Audio Description Training Retreats, where she trains writers how to write AD for TV, movies, commercials, and video games, with a focus on representing diversity.

Colleen Connor is the co-founder of Audio Description Training Retreats. Colleen earned a Bachelor's in Music Theatre from The Catholic University of America and attended The London Dramatic Academy in the UK. As a blind expert in the Audio Description industry, Colleen provides valuable insight and feedback to those training in Audio Description. Their ongoing work and outreach in the AD field include performing Quality Control for several studios, voice narration, teaching the various roles within the scope of description, and cultivating a network of diverse professionals. Guided by their Seeing Eye Dog Joplin, Colleen advocates for equity and equality wherever they go!

Liz Gutman is an Audio Description writer and narrator based in Brooklyn. She graduated from NYU Tisch with a major in acting and a minor in creative writing. Liz has written award-winning description for over 500 hours of features and series, and has voiced over 175 hours of AD. She has experience spanning the entire process of AD creation, including script and mix quality control, writer training, and directing VO and pickup sessions. Liz is always looking to improve her own craft, and to help push the industry forward by staying plugged into the AD community's wants and needs. She has incorporated feedback from AD patrons to push for improvements in company style guides, requiring their AD to include more and better descriptions of skin color, hair texture, and explicit material.

Performance 5: Blind Perception as Immersive Descriptive Audio: Accessibility as Performance in Theatre and Dance

Devon Healey (University of Toronto - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE))

Access Coordination is an emerging role within the film industry, primarily aimed at promoting the participation and representation of people with disabilities, including Deaf and neurodivergent individuals, in filmmaking (Screen Australia, 2023; Screen Skills, 2024). Within Media Accessibility (MA), specific profiles for translation and accessibility coordination have been developed, focusing on enabling access to audiovisual content (Udo & Fels, 2010; Branson, 2019; Romero Fresco, 2019). Recent training proposals have reached both

perspectives for this role (Romero Fresco, 2024). This presentation will adopt a case study approach (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013) to describe the processes, roles, and tools developed for the accessibility coordination across several educational and professional projects in Uruguay. In the professional context, it examines the coordination of a team comprising MA experts, both with and without disabilities, focusing on practices and documentation for a coherent integration of accessibility within the audiovisual piece. In the educational context, it explores a university co-creation laboratory (Tancredi et al., 2022) that implements a "holistic approach to accessibility" (Rusler, 2022, p. 69) in audiovisual media.Firstly, the presentation will identify new characteristics of the access coordinator's role. Secondly, it will outline the workflow involved in creating accessible versions of six short films, a feature film, and an eight episode series. This study aims to highlight strengths, opportunities, and challenges within these contexts, offering insights that may contribute to the definition of an access coordination profile for higher education and film industry environments. References: Google Doc.

Bio: Devon Healey is an Assistant Professor of Disability Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. She is the author of, Dramatizing Blindness: Disability Studies as Critical Creative Narrative (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). Devon is an award-winning actor and the co-founder of, Peripheral Theatre. Devon's new play, Rainbow on Mars, a sensory reclamation of blindness will premiere in Toronto, August 2025. Through her work in blind perception, Devon is the creator of Immersive Descriptive Audio (IDA), an artistic practice that, through blindness, understands accessibility as an integral part of the creative process and theatrical experience. Her publications include "Eye contact and the performative touch of blindness" in Performance Research (2022); "The Accessibility of the language of blindness and its rapport with sight: Immersive descriptive audio and Rainbow on Mars' in PUBLIC: Art, culture, ideas (2022); "Sighted blindness consultants and the ever-lasting station of blindness" in Finding Blindness: International Constructions and Deconstructions (Bolt, 2022).

Paper Session 6: Accessibility and Representation in Heritage

Getting the sense of Valencian Fallas: A participatory approach

Vanessa Gumier García

The Fallas are a festivity celebrated in March in some towns of the Valencian Community in Spain. During five days monuments, made up of ninots (caricature pieces) created by local artists which provide a commentary on current social issues, are erected on the streets and eventually set alight (unesco, 2016). Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly, 1948) prescribes equal access to culture for all, hence the need to study access for the blind and partially sighted to the Valencian Fallas. Given the sculptural nature of a falla, its audio description takes the form of an audio guide which can be complemented with multisensory experiences in the same way as artworks exhibited in

museums (Fineman & Cock, 2022). In accordance with accessible filmmaking approaches (Romero Fresco, 2019), this study is based on participatory action research, which means that all actors involved actively participate in the research and that actions are evaluated through reception studies (Eizagirre & Zabala, n.d.). Having observed the last two Fallas editions (2023 and 2024) and conducted four focus groups, as part of a preliminary step of the action phase, this paper presentation delves into how the Valencian falla Cronista Vicent Beguer i Esteve (Torrent, València) will be made sensorially accessible for the blind in March 2025 by a team made up of blind people, accessibility experts, local artists and Fallas authorities. An enriched audio description will be complemented by reliefs, scents and edible ninots. Once the falla is erected, a group of blind people will be invited to visit it and evaluate the resulting audio description through a survey.

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Bio: Vanessa Gumier García is a PhD student in Applied Languages, Literature and Translation at Universitat Jaume I, supervised by Dr Irene de Higes Andino. She is a graduate in Translation and Interpreting from Universitat Jaume I, where she has also completed a Master's degree in Secondary Education, Vocational Training and Language Teaching. She has collaborated with the research group Translation and Communication in Audiovisual Media (TRAMA) through the Estudia i Investiga programme at Universitat Jaume I. She has also worked as a freelance translator for dubbing studios and film festivals. In November 2023, she joined the research group TRAMA within the Department of Translation and Communication at Universitat Jaume I as a predoctoral scholar (ACIF/2022/246). She has just undertaken a three-month-long research stay at the University of Antwerp under the supervision of Dr Nina Reviers. Her thesis project explores accessibility to the Valencian Fallas for blind and partially sighted people.

Accessibility Services for the Blind in the World's Most Visited Museums: A Case Study

Iris C. Permuy

Tourism accessibility in general and, specifically, museum accessibility has been gaining ground in recent years due to increased disability rights' awareness and subsequent legislation being implemented. However, although comparisons have been made between museums and policies in different countries, to our knowledge there is not yet any project

focused on analyzing and contrasting blind and visually impaired access practices in major museums on different continents. In the framework of this intercontinental research, when conducting the analysis of the Louvre Museum (Paris, France) for this purpose, we encountered a complete unavailability of accessibility services for blind people and visually impaired that grant independent access. We ought not forget that the Louvre Museum is the world's most visited museum (8.9 million people in 2023). On the other hand, we have also conducted an analysis of the British Museum (London, United Kingdom, 5.8 visits in 2023) which has led us to find a radical mismatch in accessibility services between two of the most visited museums in Europe. The analysis consisted of in-person visits to the most popular artifacts and works of art, as well as interviews with the accessibility team. In this paper, we will be discussing the access issues encountered and how, unfortunately, this can serve as a reverse example of how to provide accessibility services for blind people and visually impaired in art museums. We will showcase all the ways in which the Louvre is inaccessible for blind people and visually impaired to then offer a proposal of amendment of the observed shortages and offer a proposal of amendment based upon the British Museum experience and experts' additions. We wholeheartedly believe it is paramount to highlight the importance of educating museum boards with regards to culture and art accessibility.

Bio: Iris C. Permuy holds a BA in Translation and Interpreting, an MA in Audiovisual Translation, and a postgraduate degree in International Culture Management, in addition to several specialization courses in media and event accessibility. She worked as a teaching and research assistant in the Transmedia accessibility research group at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and at the Disability Cultural Center at Syracuse University in New York. She is currently writing her doctoral thesis on museum accessibility for the blind at the Universitat Jaume I. Apart from her academic activity, she has been working as a freelance audiovisual translator for ten years, five of which she has devoted almost exclusively to audio-description for different translation agencies, digital platforms, and television broadcasters. She combines both roles with her activism as the president of ATRAE, the Spanish AVT Organization, and as a member of the council of the federation of AVT associations in Europe, AVTE.

Reclaiming disability narrative in archival spaces: An exploration of Christopher Samuel's 'Archive of An Unseen'.

Hannah Twinberrow-Hirst (University of York)

'The Archive of An Unseen' by Christopher Samuel is an interactive, intersectional, and interdisciplinary exploration of disability and identity politics. Originally exhibited at the Attenborough Arts Centre in 2022, 'The Archive of An Unseen' has since been exhibited at the Wellcome Collection (13th December 2022- 3rd April 2023) and as part of 'Sing the Body Electric: Collection 2' in Watershed (Bristol)'s gallery space Undershed (30th November 2024 - 5th January 2025). It has also featured as part of the larger exhibition 'Towards New Worlds' at the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (19th July 2024 - 9th February 2025). Samuel's exhibition invites the visitor to explore his experience growing up as a black, disabled, working class child from a single parent household in the 1980/90s. Utilising photographs, medical documents, videos, audio clips and archival items, Samuel

investigates the complex landscape of narrative and memory as he interrogates the lack of representation in our medical and social archives. In 'Archive of an Unseen', the fragmented memories of Samuel's life are displayed upon a custom-built recreation of a Microform reader which visitors are invited to utilise and engage with. Echoing the medical probing of his childhood, Samuel submits his lived experience to the scrutiny of the general public, consequently asking the viewer to consider their own autonomy, identity, and interactions with authority. Adopting an often humorous and frequently subversive tone to amplify his previously unacknowledged voice, Samuel described this exhibition as an 'expanded documentary' of his life. This paper will investigate how through 'The Archive of An Unseen', Samuel reclaims the medicalised space of disabled identity and in doing so recentres disabled voices within their own narratives. This paper considers how Samuel confronts the lack of representation and creates space for multiply marginalised individuals, as he seeks to better represent the true breadth of human lived experience. This paper will analyse various items from Samuel's digital archive to explore his experience of growing up black and disabled in the UK. Finally, this paper seeks to serve as a platform from which to further consider alternative media as legitimate presentations of complex narratives.

Bio: Hannah is an AHRC (WRoCAH) funded PhD student at the University of York whose interdisciplinary thesis focuses on the interconnectedness of disability narratives in a post(?)-COVID world. A disabled, queer, new mother, Hannah approaches her writing from an intersectional, interdisciplinary and multimedia perspective. Having initially undertaken a BDS Dentistry - until disability forced her to withdraw - Hannah went on to complete a BA English at the University of Cambridge. She was elected as Wolfson College's Student Disabilities Representative during her undergraduate degree and also volunteered on the University's Silver COVID task force committee to provide a voice for the clinically vulnerable community. Following her graduation from Cambridge, she was awarded the Wellcome Trust Scholarship for MA Medical History & Humanities at the University of York and achieved a Distinction in 2022. Alongside her PhD, managing her disability, and raising her young son with her partner, Hannah has worked as an EDI Coordinator for York Students' Union and freelances as an EDI guest speaker. When taking a moment to herself, Hannah loves listening to an audiobook and eating toast.

Audience Research Should Be Fun: A Manifesto for Accessible and Creative Audience Research

Hudson Ray (National Science and Media Museum), Elaine Richmond (National Science and Media Museum)

Opening in 2025, the Sound & Vision galleries at the National Science and Media Museum will house our permanent collections of technology that makes the big screen, images, music, and gaming come to life. Our ambition is that they are the most accessible and audience-led galleries the Museum had ever made. To reach this goal, we set out to involve a range of audiences in their design from the beginning. This included members of our local

D/deaf, Blind, and visually impaired communities, as well as those with neuro-diversities and learning disabilities. Testing with these groups during the museum's closure necessitated the use of creative, accessible, and mutually rewarding methods in community spaces. These included sessions exploring gallery soundscapes through art and dance, involving D/deaf student groups in curatorial work that de-centred disability, and exploring new methods of gallery interpretation with visually impaired audiences. The project was also supported through consultation by an Access Panel made up of locals who have lived experience or work with those with a variety of accessibility needs. In this session we review the approaches to audience research and consultation with these groups during the project, discuss their abundant merits and occasional challenges, and assess the impact on the final galleries. We aim to show that audience research can be fun, accessible, and non-prescriptive in its approaches to gathering data, and that these methodologies are suitable for much wider audiences. This project presses home the importance of involving priority audiences in gallery design from the start, the community connections this creates, and the joy in coming together.

Bios:

Hudson Ray is the Audience Researcher supporting the delivery of two new galleries at the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford. Together with teams across the museum, they test out gallery designs, approaches to interpretation, and new learning resources. Their work focuses on increasing the accessibility of science content for priority audiences. They have worked for the Science Museum Group for three years.

Elaine Richmond is Community Partnership and Events Manager at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford. Elaine led on several of the Sound and Vision Activity Plan strands, including the Access Panel, Community Consultation, Access Facilitation and the Youth Forum. Elaine has worked for National Science and Media Museum for 16 years working with young people and families in the diverse communities of Bradford.

Lightning Bolt Session

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Professional Practices in Media Accessibility

Leticia Lorier (Universidad de la República, Universidade de Vigo), Florencia Fascioli Álvarez (Universidad Católica del Uruguay, Universidade de Vigo)

Access Coordination is an emerging role within the film industry, primarily aimed at promoting the participation and representation of people with disabilities, including Deaf and neurodivergent individuals, in filmmaking (Screen Australia, 2023; Screen Skills, 2024). Within Media Accessibility (MA), specific profiles for translation and accessibility coordination have been developed, focusing on enabling access to audiovisual content (Udo & Fels, 2010; Branson, 2019; Romero Fresco, 2019). Recent training proposals have reached both perspectives for this role (Romero Fresco, 2024). This presentation will adopt a case study approach (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013) to describe the processes, roles, and tools developed

for the accessibility coordination across several educational and professional projects in Uruguay. In the professional context, it examines the coordination of a team comprising MA experts, both with and without disabilities, focusing on practices and documentation for a coherent integration of accessibility within the audiovisual piece. In the educational context, it explores a university co-creation laboratory (Tancredi et al., 2022) that implements a "holistic approach to accessibility" (Rusler, 2022, p. 69) in audiovisual media. Firstly, the presentation will identify new characteristics of the access coordinator's role. Secondly, it will outline the workflow involved in creating accessible versions of six short films, a feature film, and an eight episode series. This study aims to highlight strengths, opportunities, and challenges within these contexts, offering insights that may contribute to the definition of an access coordination profile for higher education and film industry environments.

References: Google Doc

Bios:

Leticia Lorier is a PhD student in the Communication Programme at Universidade de Vigo (Spain). She has postgraduate studies in Cultural Accessibility, Language and Culture, and Literary Translation. She holds a Communication degree from the Universidad de la República (Udelar, Uruguay). She is a professor at the Information and Communication Faculty (Udelar). She co-coordinate the Interdisciplinary Nucleus on Accessibility and Communication (Udelar).

Florencia Fascioli Álvarez is a PhD student at Universidade de Vigo (Galicia, Spain). She holds a master's degree in Audiovisual Translation from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a Communication degree from the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She has been working as a freelance audiovisual editor since 2002 as well as a cinema and theatre audio describer since 2010. She currently works as a Full-Time Professor in the Department of Humanities and Communication at the Universidad Católica del Uruguay. She is a member of the Núcleo Interdisciplinario Comunicación y Accesibilidad (NICA) at the Universidad de la República (Uruguay).

Audio Description...Aiding Dementia?

Polly Ellen Goodwin (PolySensoryAccess)

As the 2024 report of the Lancet Commission on dementia prevention, intervention and care confirms, age, along with genetics, remains the most significant factor in developing dementia . This parallels the data around sight loss; with people experiencing age-onset blindness (including preventable conditions) making up the largest cohort. The same report confirms a further intersection between these two groups, finding there is increased vulnerability to developing dementia amongst those who are blind or have low vision. Scanning other research in this space reveals an emerging awareness of the benefits to those with dementia of watching films and television programmes . Well established is the benefit of physical activity for this group, and this too can be supported through audio-visual content such as exercise videos. But for those with parallel or intersecting age-onset sight loss, how can content that relies on visuals be accessible? The answer is audio description (AD). AD translates visual content into content a user can hear. It is a key tool of access that was originally designed to render visual content accessible and meaningful for people who

are blind or have low vision and remains primarily aimed at this audience. However, as an additional, auditory source of information, and potentially also explanation and reiteration, AD holds potential beyond its initial remit. The concept of tailoring AD for various audiences is gaining traction, as are the technical and work-flow advancements required practically. This lightning bolt presentation (drawing on the early work for a PhD) would explore the development of a process to optimise audio description to specifically respond to the needs of those with dementia (both with and without vision loss), opening-up content that can enhance physical and mental health. Understanding the particular needs of this group could lead to innovations in designing a version of AD that specifically responds to the needs of those with dementia (both with and without vision loss).

Bio: Polly's career has been devoted to widening access for people who are blind or have low vision. As a trained and practising audio describer, with nearly 15 years of experience, she creates audio description tracks for broadcast television, cinema, streaming platforms, live presentations, and galleries. She runs the Australian chapter of an initiative, aimed at encouraging young consumers to engage with audio description, has created an accredited unit on using AD aimed at young people and is a member of the Audio Description advisory Board run by Curtin University's Centre for Culture and Technology. As a researcher, she focuses on the potential and challenges of new and alternative applications of audio description, including as part of Dr Xiaochun Zhang's AD4Games project (which explores how audio description might enhance gameplay for players who are blind or have low vision). Current and previous research projects have explored the audio describing in the field of physical exercise, silent film and fashion, as well as the ethical position of the audio describer and their relation to the end user.

Media accessibility in internal communication as a strategy for the inclusion and participation of visually impaired workers

Guilherme Ferreira de Oliveira and Suely Maciel (São Paulo State University (Unesp))

This paper aims to discuss the practice of accessibility in internal communication, as an innovative and strategic activity, based on the perceptions and experiences of people with visual impairments in the organizational context. The study is entirely based in qualitative field research conducted with visually impaired people. Online and anonymous questionnaires to capture their perceptions about accessibility in internal communication were applied between April and May 2024 and were disseminated with the support of institutions for visually impaired people in Brazil. Content Analysis (Câmara, 2013) was used to process the data. A total of 34 valid responses were obtained. Of the respondents, 28 are blind and six have low vision. The results of the analysis indicate that accessibility must be considered in all possible situations and instances, being present in: i. the consideration of the necessary assistive technologies; ii. the inclusion of accessibility aspects in information and communication systems, as well as in technological platforms and devices; iii. the availability of alternative versions of the media; and iv. the content disseminated. It is also understood that accessibility acts as a mediator in relationships, and its absence generates harm in work practice and participation in the organizational environment. This happens because organizational cultures are mediated by the view of ableism and thus structures are

built that do not consider functional diversity and non-normative ways of accessing information. Media accessibility (Greco & Jankowska, 2020) must be considered in internal communication in the practical/operational field (media accessibility modalities as a new practice for internal communication professionals), but also in the construction of more inclusive cultures, as a way of teaching professionals and organizations to respect diversity (Oliveira, 2024). In this way inclusion is promoted and it is a way of fighting ableism and promoting participation.

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Bios:

Guilherme Ferreira de Oliveira holds a Master in Media and Technology and a bachelor's degree in Public Relations both from the Faculty of Architecture, Arts, Communication and Design of the São Paulo State University (Unesp)/Brazil. Member of the Research Group on Language and Accessible Media (Gelima) and he is a collaborator of the Laboratory of Education, Research and Extension in Media and Accessibility "Biblioteca Falada".

Suely Maciel is a Professor of undergraduate courses and the Postgraduate Program in Media and Technology at the Faculty of Architecture, Arts, Communication and Design of the São Paulo State University (Unesp)/Brazil. Leader of the Research Group on Language and Accessible Media (Gelima) and Coordinator of the Laboratory of Education, Research and Extension in Media and Accessibility "Biblioteca Falada".

The lived experiences of Individuals with Impairments (IWI): obtaining and maintaining work in the creative industries (CI)

Liz Turnbull (University of York)

This research investigates the marginalisation and discrimination faced by individuals with impairments (IWI) in the creative industries (CI), with a specific focus on film, video, and television. Grounded in stigma theory, ableist theory, and critical disability theory, the study explores how societal attitudes and structural barriers perpetuate exclusion and inequality in employment. Aligned with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the research examines career opportunities, progression, and pension access issues. Women with impairments face compounded discrimination, deepening both economic and professional disparities (Randle and Hardy, 2017). IWI's average monthly living costs are approximately £1122 higher than those of non-impaired individuals (SCOPE, 2023),

demonstrating the significant challenges in securing meaningful employment. Employment is critical to improving the mental well-being of IWI (Ridley et al., 2020). Yet, access to well-remunerated work remains restricted by structural ableism and exclusionary practices within the CI. This research synthesises stigma theory, the sociology of work, and disability studies to assess how discriminatory practices impact self-esteem, social mobility, and the overall well-being of IWI in the creative industries. Data collection will begin in January 2025, using purposive sampling to gather personal narratives from IWI employed within the CI. The study will also investigate existing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policies to evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing accessibility. By addressing the barriers to inclusivity and exploring accessible creative processes, this research aims to provide valuable insights that inform future policy interventions. Ultimately, it seeks to promote equitable employment and reduce persistent inequalities for IWI within the creative industries, contributing to the broader discourse on accessibility and representation.

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Bio: Liz Turnbull, a dedicated PhD candidate supported by a prestigious scholarship from the University of York's School for Business and Society, passionately unravels the career trajectories of individuals with impairments in the creative industries. Bridging the sociology of work and critical disability studies, Liz explores the nuanced intersections to illuminate the challenges and opportunities within this marginalised demographic. Beyond academia, she aspires to be a formidable disability ally, which is evident in her commitment to driving positive change in equality, diversity, and inclusion policies. Informed by impactful work in education with children who live with disabilities, Liz brings a solid foundation to her current exploration of strategies empowering individuals with impairments to realise lifelong aspirations. Her journey exemplifies the transformation potential of combining academic rigour with a profound commitment to social progress, as she dedicates herself to fostering inclusivity and advocating for the underrepresented.

Co-Designing Assistive Technology for Visually Impaired Musicians in Ensemble Settings

Rachel Horrell (University of Plymouth)

In ensemble settings, visually impaired musicians face significant challenges, as inaccessible conductor cues and sheet music restrict their ability to participate fully alongside their sighted peers (Baker, 2014; Baker and Green, 2017; Lussier-Dalpé et al., 2022; Payne et al., 2022). While previous research has explored accessibility challenges in music

performance, such as Lu et al's., (2023) haptic wearable for communicating during one-to-one music lessons and Payne et al's., (2022) music notation software that is compatible with screen readers, their remains limited practical solutions tailored to real-time ensemble integration. To inform this project, the author conducted a survey that identified key limitations experienced by visually impaired musicians in ensemble settings. This survey was followed by in-depth interviews with seven participants, which offered more profound insight into their personal experiences and the specific accessibility barriers they encounter—particularly exclusion from ensembles that rely heavily on visual cues and traditional music notation. In response to these findings, this project adopts a participatory co-design and case study approach, engaging closely with a visually impaired musician to explore and develop an assistive tool that supports real-time engagement in ensemble contexts. Over several months, the author and participant will work collaboratively to identify specific needs and co-design a solution that utilises haptic feedback for conductor cueing. This phase will involve iterative prototyping and refinement to develop an initial working prototype and generate insights to inform future development. While the tool is being developed with a single participant, the process is designed to produce transferable insights and design principles that can inform more inclusive ensemble practices across similar contexts. As a work-in-progress, this project aims to empower visually impaired musicians to participate more fully alongside sighted peers while also contributing to advancing inclusive practices within the broader creative industries.

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Bio: Rachel Horrell is a PhD student at the University of Plymouth, where she is researching music accessibility with the aim to develop technology for musicians who are visually impaired. Alongside this, Rachel works as a music tutor, delivering a variety of music sessions across local primary schools.

Creative Arts-Based Pedagogy with Autistic Students: Co-Producing a Manifesto

Kayleigh Doyle (University of York), Prof. Kathryn Asbury (University of York)

In a systematic review exploring stakeholders' perspectives of creative arts-based pedagogy (CABP) with autistic students in mainstream secondary education, I found that stakeholders thought Creative arts-based pedagogy was a safe, neurodiversity friendly, fun space wherein autistic students could develop socially, emotionally, personally and academically. Negatives of CABP, such as overstimulation, and barriers to implementation such as curriculum, behaviour, class size and facilities were also identified. There were, however, only 5 papers suitable for inclusion. Research on CABP is limited, particularly research exploring the perspectives of teachers and autistic students themselves; their perceptions are particularly valuable as they are key stakeholders who directly experience what works in education. Therefore, the aim of this project is to explore the perspectives of autistic young people and mainstream secondary school teachers on the positives and negatives of, and barriers and facilitators to, using CABP with autistic students in mainstream secondary schools in England. This will be explored through three studies; a questionnaire with mainstream secondary school teachers, interviews with autistic mainstream secondary school students and a co-production workshop with both participant groups. This lightning bolt & poster presentation will explore the output of these studies: A "CABP Manifesto", co-produced with autistic young people and mainstream secondary school teachers. The manifesto, with stakeholders voices at its core, will guide future CABP researchers, and guide educational practitioners in an endeavour to implement CABP in their classroom. Lay Abstract: I am interested in how autistic young people and teachers feel about using creative arts to teach autistic students in mainstream schools, and what they think makes it easier or harder. I found that teaching through the creative arts can be good for autistic students socially, emotionally, personally and academically, but there are lots of things that get in the way, like class sizes, time, curriculum and behaviour. By chatting to autistic young people and teachers, we will create a "CABP manifesto", explaining what autistic young people and teachers would like to see in the future of CABP.

Bios:

Kayleigh is a PhD researcher in the Psychology in Education Research Centre (PERC) at the University of York and is the co-organiser of the Universities interdisciplinary disability research network (IDRN). Her interests centre around neurodiversity, pedagogy, creative arts and inclusive, accessible, qualitative approaches to research. Kayleigh's current PhD research uses a range of qualitative methods to explore the perspectives of autistic young people and teachers, with a focus on creative arts-based pedagogy. Kayleigh is also currently working on an ESRC funded project in the department of education, titled "Nothing about us without us: co-producing inclusive data collections infrastructure with learning-disabled people". Before working and studying in higher education, Kayleigh worked in applied theatre and performance; this included working on projects with Camden Carers, local primary schools and a range of other local charities. Kayleigh also has experience supporting neurodivergent young people in performing arts and educational settings.

Kathryn's research is focused in two main areas: the implications of genetic research for education and the inclusion of learning disabled and neurodivergent voices in research. She is a Professor of Psychology in Education at the University of York and is currently Co-Head of York's Department of Education.

Interactive Multi-Sensory Environment (iMSE) Design To Support Social Engagement For Visually Impaired (VI) Children In China

Qiti Zhang (University of York)

Current creative and play practices predominantly rely on visual interaction modes, systematically excluding visually impaired children from creative and social participation. By employing a user-centred design approach, this research explores the potential for an interactive Multi-Sensory Environment designed for visually impaired children in primary school in China (aged 6 to 12). This research argues that non-visually-dominated creative interactive designs can provide ways to support social engagement for visually impaired children. In order to better understand the complex context of visually impaired children and the potential of multi-sensory environments, I conducted a series of interviews with experts, teachers and staff from a therapy centre and a Multi-Sensory Environment company in the UK and with teachers in China. Through an in-depth analysis of the social experience and behaviour of visually impaired children, this research seeks to expand their social participation opportunities and enhance sensory feedback in social behaviours to support the development of social communication. Based on the interview data and literature, three tangible-digital prototypes were created: a) sensory-enhanced wearable devices, b) a multi-sensory interactive toy, and c) an embodied sensory game. This paper will present the prototypes and early results from user testing with visually impaired children and their parents or guardians in China. The next stage of the research will be to develop a high-fidelity prototype designed to engage and enable visually impaired children to experience different sensory stimuli while interacting with peers. To ensure real-world applicability, I will re-engage with visually impaired children in China to evaluate the optimised design. This research not only provides innovative design-led solutions to improve Chinese visually impaired children's social participation, but also challenges the visual-centred design paradigm, offering an inclusive interactive design paradigm and a practical use case for the creative industries.

Bio: Phd student by research at the School of Arts and Creative Technologies.