



Module 4

Unit 3: Audio description for static arts

Core video transcript

Module 4

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Transcript

Slide 1

This is Chris Taylor from the University of Trieste, and in this video from the ADLAB PRO project I will be moving into how to actually create ADs for static arts. This is Unit 3 (AD for static arts) in Module 4 (Semi-live or recorded AD for static arts and environments).

Slide 2

General information should be provided on the historical background to the work, and the artist. Questions of movement and period and style e.g., a description of the techniques used, should be given. These considerations, listed on slides 2-4, are taken liberally from the 2012 ADLAB guidelines (see reading list) compiled by Josélia Neves. The aspects shown are all important for an understanding of the exhibit but must be presented briefly before moving onto the description proper.

Slide 3

In general help the person with sight loss (which we will now refer to as the PSL) to build up an image (colours, shapes, position of objects, and so on).

Slide 4

Here the selection of the elements to describe is all important. Firstly choose only those elements that are indispensable for a recreation of the visual,

using vivid but not jargonistic vocabulary.

Then add as much or as little information as the listeners need or seem to want. Be prepared to stop if concentration sags. Where possible, offer the chance to touch the exhibits.

Slide 5

AD is a genre distinguishable from other types of text.

The various features of this genre, as shown in the following slides, need to be recognized.

Slide 6

This slide refers to the general features of AD associated principally with screen translation. Some of these features (vivid lexis, exclusive use of the present tense for the actual description, short, paratactic, declarative sentences, a more than usual use of verbs) are also common to static art AD.

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Slide 7

This slide also refers to the general features of AD associated principally with screen translation. But some of these features (cohesion, repetition, anaphoric reference, a more than usual use of non-finite verbs in theme position, isolated noun phrases) are also common to static art AD.

Slide 8

Thus, many of the features pertaining to AD in general apply also to static arts AD. However, there are some important differences. Static art AD allows for a freer approach.

Slide 9

The questions of concision, timing and synchronisation, though not entirely irrelevant, can be tailored to the task in hand.

Slide 10

Screen AD generally requires the use of short, simple, paratactic sentences, while static art AD is not subject to such strict limitations - the tendency to be prolix and highly detailed should be avoided however, it could cause confusion and boredom, and not provide a similar experience to that of the sighted patron. The describer must decide how long and detailed the description can be and how to best recreate the image without overburdening the listener.

Slide 11

Timing is of paramount importance in screen AD where the text has to be inserted between stretches of dialogue, but in static art AD this is unnecessary. However, if a visit is scheduled to last, for example, one hour, then time on each exhibit must be calculated accurately and judiciously.

Slide 12

The same logic applies to the question of synchronization. It is sufficient to make sure that the time spent on one exhibit does not jeopardise the timing of the rest of the tour. What is important is that judicious decisions be taken to identify the elements to describe, in order to not overburden, confuse or bore the listener.

Slide 13

While for AD in general the use of appraisal (that is personal interpretations, subjective description) is either frowned upon or acceptable in small doses, in describing works of art, especially those considered worthy of description, it is difficult to avoid using expressions of approval, pleasure and personal interpretation. Within reason, this can help to bring the exhibit to life for the PSL.

Slide 14

There are differing opinions among theorists and practitioners regarding the amount of appraisal permissible in an AD, but this division (between the entirely objective and the more liberal approach) has been mostly reserved for screen AD policy. The phrase ‘a beautiful girl’ in film translation is a subjective opinion and should be avoided. But describing artworks as ‘magnificent’ or ‘remarkable’ and colours as ‘voluptuous’ would seem to be more acceptable, take for example ‘these magnificent 17th century tapestries’.

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Slide 15

In the example shown in the slide

‘... the walls are covered with rich, cream-coloured silk, hand painted with floral patterns to achieve a perfect oriental style’.

the describer has made a personal interpretation in describing the achievement of a ‘perfect’ oriental style. It might also be pointed out that the museum guidebook also uses this term. And it is perfectly legitimate to use such sources sparingly, in integrating one’s description.

Slide 16

It is now time to consider what a description should look like. Analysing existing ADs and commenting on them is a good way to ease into the creation process. Have the linguistic and textual features of the genre been applied? Is there sufficient, or too much, appraisal?

Making a checklist of the various criteria required of a static art AD is a useful technique in beginning an analysis.

Slide 17

Are the features described suitable for the audience? Are they art lovers, ordinary members of the public, the elderly, children?

Slide 18

Have the linguistic and textual features of the genre been applied?
Is there sufficient, or too much, appraisal?

Slide 19

The painting shown on this slide is 'Woman with a Dog' by the Italian painter Giuseppe De Nittis. (Revoltella Museum, Trieste).

Slide 20

Please refer to the video 'AD ANALYSIS' for advice on analyzing the audio description of this picture.

This the final slide in Unit Three.

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