

**BAFTSS Practice Research SIG Report 2022**  
**Convened by Charlotte Crofts and John Twycross**

**1. BAFTSS Practice Research Panel at Annual Conference**

Practice Research SIG in association with *Screenworks*: Accessible Filmmaking

This panel developed out of the publication of *Screenworks*' [accessibility policy](#) and the feedback on the journal's demand for contributors to caption their screen media practice for publication, both from those who felt this was too onerous and from others who felt it didn't go far enough.

*Chair: Charlotte Crofts (UWE Bristol)*

**From the Universal to the Self in Media Accessibility: Accessibility as a Conversation**

**Kate Dangerfield & Pablo Romero Fresco (University of Roehampton, London & Universidade di Vigo, Spain)**

Film has a long-standing relationship with the notion of universality, which has often been used by Hollywood to perpetuate a dominant and unified worldview and to disseminate certain (Western) values that contribute to set what should and should not be considered as normal. Audiovisual translation and media accessibility should undermine the notion of universality in film, as they illustrate difference by rendering translation and translators visible and highlighting the inaccessibility of cinema both as a practice and as an institution. However, media accessibility has somehow reinstated the notion of universality through the reference to universal design and the use of the "for all" tag used in legislation, conferences and publications over the past years. This may sometimes mask the exclusion of certain users who are not catered for by most mainstream accessibility guidelines, such as people with dual/single sensory impairments and complex communication needs.

The first aim of this presentation is to explore how the notion of universality has been used in media accessibility and how it is reflected in official guidelines and in current practice. The second aim is to introduce and analyse the work of an emerging wave of (mostly disabled) artists who are proposing an alternative approach to media accessibility, one that is openly subjective, increasingly creative and that often works as a political tool in a wider fight against discrimination and for real inclusion. Special emphasis will be placed on the work produced by artists such as Christine Sun Kim, Liza Sylvestre and Caroline Lazard, who are questioning the objective and static nature of access. They consider access as a promise and as speculative practice, rather than as a guarantee; as a conversation or a two-way process involving meaningful contribution by disabled and non-disabled people, rather than a monologue where no-disabled artists provide access to their work to disabled users.

## **We Make Film: Accessibility and Inclusion in Film Practice Research Projects**

**Shweta Ghosh & Priyanka Pal (University of Reading)**

The We Make Film research project explores the experiences and creative work of filmmakers with disabilities in contemporary urban India. It explores diverse ways in which disability and filmmaking interact in urban Indian contexts, focusing on accessibility of technology, barriers to film consumption and education, and the possibilities for cross-ability collaborations.

The research employs an interdisciplinary film practice methodology - a combination of close analysis, visual elicitation, creative interviewing, and participatory and reflexive documentary practice. Primary data collection was undertaken via collaborative interview-workshops with disabled and d/Deaf filmmaker-participants, who were filmed by the filmmaker-researcher (Shweta Ghosh) and the crew (Priyanka Pal and Sumit Singh) for a feature documentary titled We Make Film. A significant aspect of the methodology was accessible filmmaking to make the filmmaking process and the documentary as accessible as possible for disabled crewmembers, filmmaker-participants and audiences. This paper discusses the development of critical intentions and actions taken during the production and post-production phases of We Make Film for film accessibility. It then engages with the tensions between exploratory film practice research and documentary making processes, and the wider structural challenges posed by limited funding and accessibility in the Indian context. Finally, it evaluates the degree to which We Make Film was successful in being accessible in product and process and the plans going forward.

Through a discussion of the intersection of accessible filmmaking processes and film practice research, this paper makes a case for a cyclical process of reflection, evaluation and refinement for filmmaker-researchers as a way to work through 'successes' and 'failures' and make a commitment to accessibility and inclusion in film practice research projects.

### **2. Future Plans**

We hope to develop the media access strand further in collaboration with the Film/Making Education SIG to explore media access pedagogy in order to raise awareness of media access in the next generation of filmmaking talent.

### **3. John Twycross stepping down**

A huge thank you to John Twycross for his stint as co-convenor of the SIG since it was founded in 2016 and a warm welcome to Shreepali Patel who is joining as co-convenor from 2022.