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AUDIO DESCRIPTION WHAT IS IT?

Audio description is the verbal translation of visual information to make theater, television, films, museums exhibits and events more accessible and understandable for people who are blind or have low vision.

IN THEATERS, the describer talks via a small transmitter to listeners seated throughout the audience. Speaking during natural pauses in the dialogue, the trained describer verbally describes actions, body language, lights, costumes, scenery and other aspects of the production not conveyed by voices from the stage. For theater patrons with low or no vision, audio description provides additional information that advances the plot of the performance and enhances the listener's comprehension.

FOR MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITS, audio description provides informational accessibility. Audio description training or specially prepared scripts for guides and docents assist them to provide meaningful visual translation to visitors at the museum collection and traveling exhibits.

FOR TV AND MOVIES, described shows are generally designated with the symbol DVS, which stands for Descriptive Video Service. DVS is also being provided in select movie theaters in Texas. Please visit our website, <http://www.vsatx.org/audioEvents.html> for a partial listing of participating theaters.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION ... WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

Audio description was developed in 1981 by Margaret and Cody Pfanstiehl of the Metropolitan Washington EAR, in partnership with Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. It now can be found in numerous communities across the United States and around the world. Visit www.acb.org/adp for a listing of recently released described videos and other information regarding DVS and movies.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION ... IN TEXAS.

Audio description was introduced to Austin in 1995 by a small group of individuals who were dedicated to making the cultural arts accessible to all patrons. VSA Texas currently describes live performances, movies, museum exhibits, and cultural events for people in Austin, and has been working with groups across the State to train describers and help establish audio description services. Staff and volunteers are providing technical support in San Antonio to launch services, and there is a small group of individuals organized in Houston that serves patrons through the local radio reading service. Some services are also being offered in Dallas at the Meadows Museum and AT&T Center.

For more information about audio description and how you can become a describer, call Lynn Johnson at 512-454-9912 or email lynn@vsatx.org