



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission



Closing Conference: Deaf Mobility Studies



#mobiledeaf2023

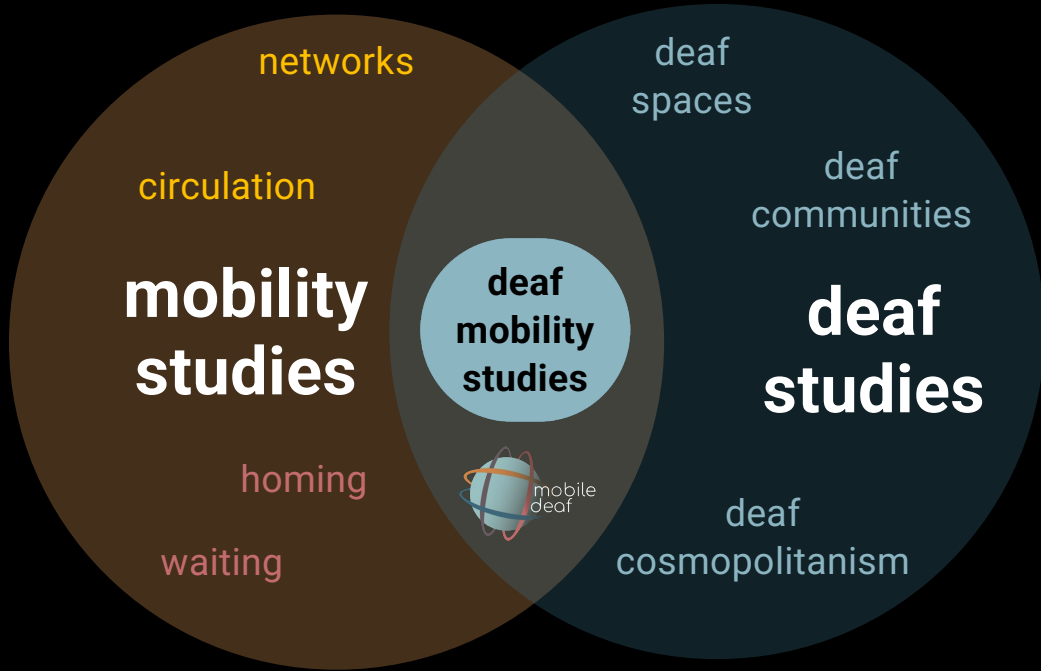
Friday 2 June 2023

- 09:00-09:45 Deaf ethnography and filmmaking
MobileDeaf Team and Jorn Rijckaert
- 09:45-10:30 Mobility Studies **Noel Salazar**
- 10:30-11:00 Break
- 11:00-11:30 History of international deaf mobilities **Joseph Murray**
- 11:30-12:30 Spaces of belonging, times of immobility, and translocal networks
MobileDeaf team
- 12:30-13:30 Lunch
- 13:30-15:00 Spaces of belonging, times of immobility, and translocal networks
MobileDeaf team
- 15:00-15:30 Break
- 15:30-16:00 Discussion
- 16:00-17:00 Mobility of deaf professionals and researchers
Lynn Hou and Rose Kwamboka
- 17:00 Reception

Saturday 3 June 2023

- 09:00-09:45 Linguaging and mobilities **Sender Dovchin**
- 09:45-10:15 Calibrating and language learning **MobileDeaf team**
- 10:15-10:45 Break
- 10:45-12:15 Calibrating and language learning **MobileDeaf team**
- 12:15-12:45 Discussion
- 12:45-13:45 Lunch
- 13:45-14:30 Language in migration **Nora Duggan and Anna Lim**
- 14:30-15:15 Languages in contact
Phoebe Tay and Rodrigo Nogueira Machado
- 15:15-15:45 Break
- 15:45-16:15 Discussion
- 16:15-16:35 Discussants **Noel Salazar and Sender Dovchin**
- 16:35-17:00 Mobilizing Deaf Studies to the future **Octavian Robinson**

Studying different forms of mobility (eg: commuting, tourism, migration, professional travel)



Studying deaf communities, histories, socialities, cultures



Cosmopolitanism

Origins: Greek word
"kosmopolitês" - world
citizen(ship)

Cosmopolitanism:

- attitude/orientation
(openness, willingness)
- practices/skills (such as
calibration)
- abilities (such as empathy)

NOTE: Cosmopolitanism,
seeking unity, may overlook
diverse **challenges and
inequalities**



Deaf cosmopolitanism = **antithesis** of the immobile, isolated deaf person

Deaf people **scattered** across society,
most born into hearing families

Connectedness: deaf schools,
clubs, associations, and events

Deaf cosmopolitanism: **connecting**
across international borders

Sign language as especially
suited for border-crossing
(learning new sign
languages, International Sign)

It's a Small World

International Deaf Spaces and Encounters



Michele Friedner and Annelies Kusters, Editors

- Emic deaf concepts on deaf cosmopolitanism:
 - "DEAF-SAME": the idea that deaf people can and do connect across national and linguistic borders
 - "It's a small world": deaf transnational networks
- Book "It's a small world" (2015):
 - mostly focus on **short term, privileged mobility** (project work, conferences, sports)
 - both **confirms and challenges** "DEAF-SAME", "small deaf world"

'An important book about the great human project of trying to live together' **Kofi Annan**

KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH

COSMOPOLITANISM

ETHICS IN A WORLD OF STRANGERS



Cosmopolitanism as a **challenge**, not a solution

“A citizen of the world:
how far can we
take that idea?”

(Kwame Appiah)






Aim of MobileDeaf: **interrogate**
deaf cosmopolitanism

by studying a **spectrum** of mobilities and
immobilities

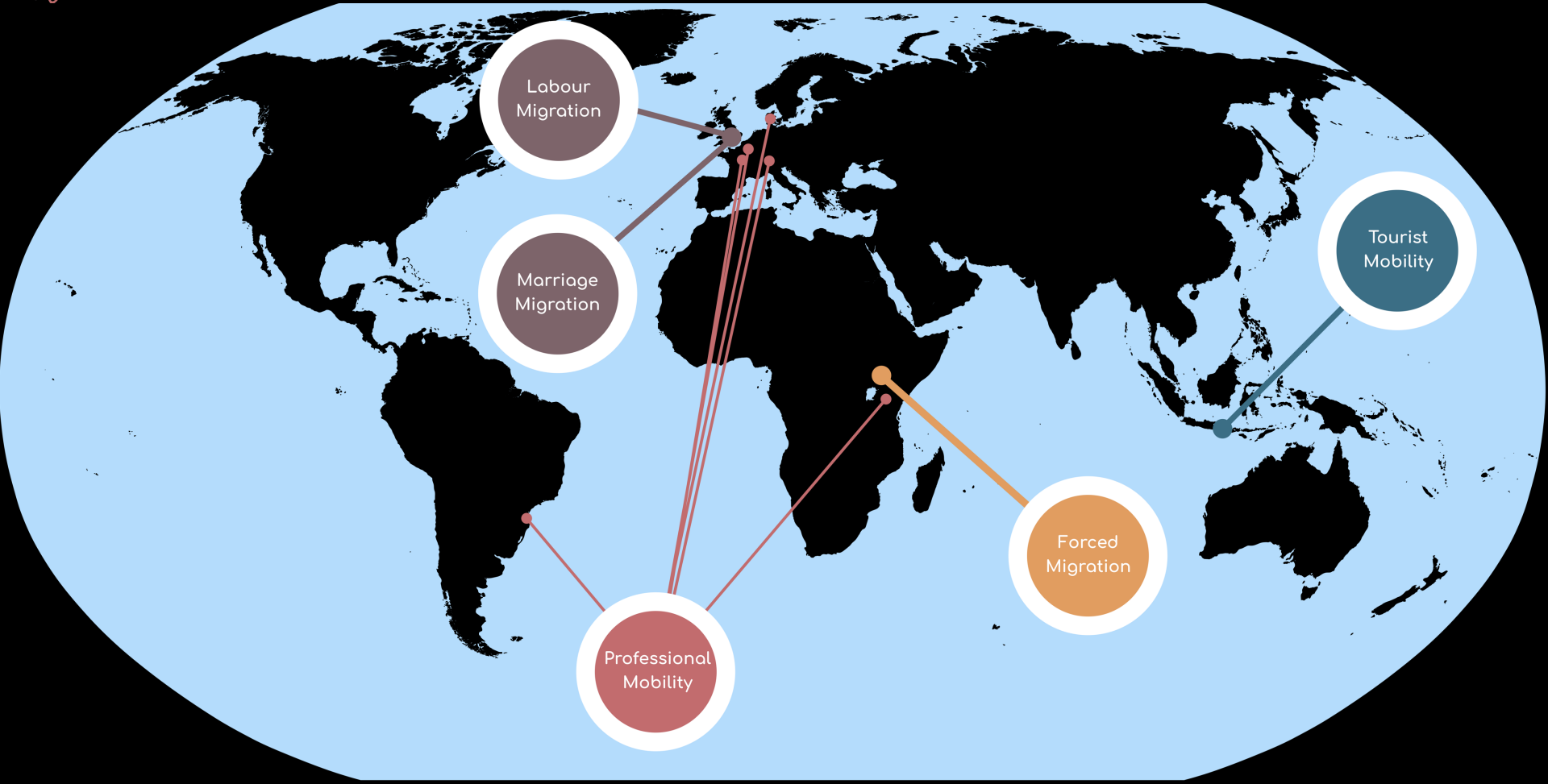


Doing deaf cultural research

- **European Research Council**
Starting Grant: 1.5 million Euros
- **MobileDeaf team:** 5 deaf researchers (1 Lead, 2 Postdocs, 2 PhDs)
- **Fields:** Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Geography, International Development
- **Significance:** Deaf-led professional development and research
- **Access:** Entering deaf-only spaces, whilst acknowledging impact of our positionality

Name	Age	Gender/s exuality	Race	Nationality	Language Background	Disability	Mobilities
 Annelies Kusters	30s	F, cis, fluid she/her	White	Belgian	VGT, BSL, ISL, IS, Dutch, English	Deaf, neurodivergent	Belgium (grew up), Surinam (research), Ghana (research), England (study), India (family, research), Germany (work), Scotland (work)
 Amandine le Maire	30s	F, cis she/her	White	Belgian	LSFB, French, IS, BSL, English	Deaf, cancer survivor	Belgium (grew up), Denmark (study), S. America (project and backpack), Scotland (study), Northern Ireland (family)
 Steven Emery	50s	M, cis he/him	White	British	BSL, English, some Irish and Colombian Sign Language, some IS	Deaf, disabled	Ireland (partner), Colombia (partner), US (work and backpacking), all-continents world trip (backpacking), Europe trip (backpacking), Wales (work), Scotland (work)
 Sanchayeeta Iyer	40s	F, cis, queer she/her	Brown	British	SSE, BSL, English, IS	Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent	Philippines (voluntary work), Rwanda (project), India (family) Chile (project), Holland (study) Scotland (work), Hong Kong (visa) South and North America (backpack)
 Erin Moriarty	40s	F, cis, queer she/her	White	US	ASL, BSL, Cambodian SL, English, IS	Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent	Cambodia (research) Indonesia (research) Scotland (work) United States (work)

Our research locations



MobileDeaf covers a **spectrum** of international deaf mobilities

Temporalities: short time stays, temporary forms of mobility, and settlement for long periods of time.

Socio-economic nature: difficult ways and luxurious ways of navigating the world

Aspirations: forced, professional, social and personal mobility

Forced Migration



WHO: Refugees mostly from Sudan and Somalia, people working in the camp

WHERE: Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya

WHAT: everyday life in camp, loss of home, future hopes, forced idleness

Labour Migration



WHO: Migrants for work (from world) for marriage (Indian women) (but also: migration as child, student mobility)

WHERE: London

WHAT: social spaces in the city, language learning, homing, barriers to social and economic integration

Marriage Migration



Professional Mobility



WHO: Deaf professionals and their audiences, organisers, employers

WHERE: Multisited:
Denmark (Frontrunners)
Brazil (SIGN conference)
Kenya (translation centre)
Italy (Winter Deaflympics)
France (WFD, WASLI, Clin d'Oeil)

WHAT: International Sign: strategies, discourses, experiences;

Tourist Mobility

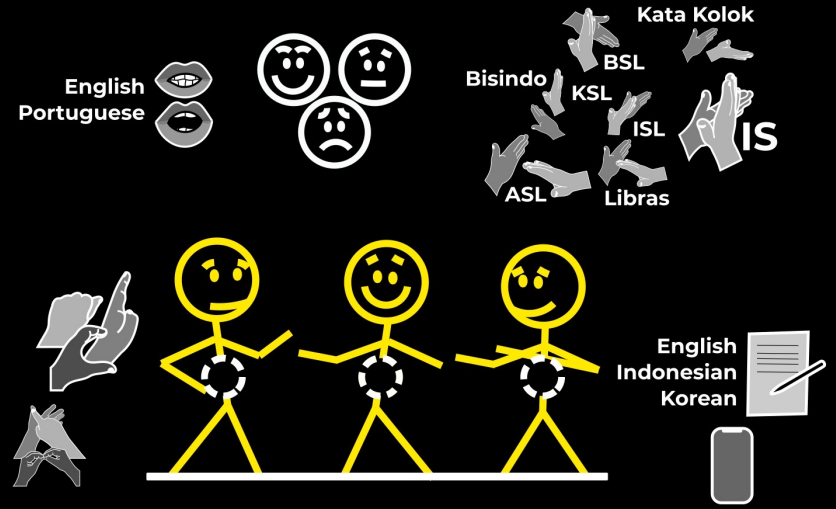
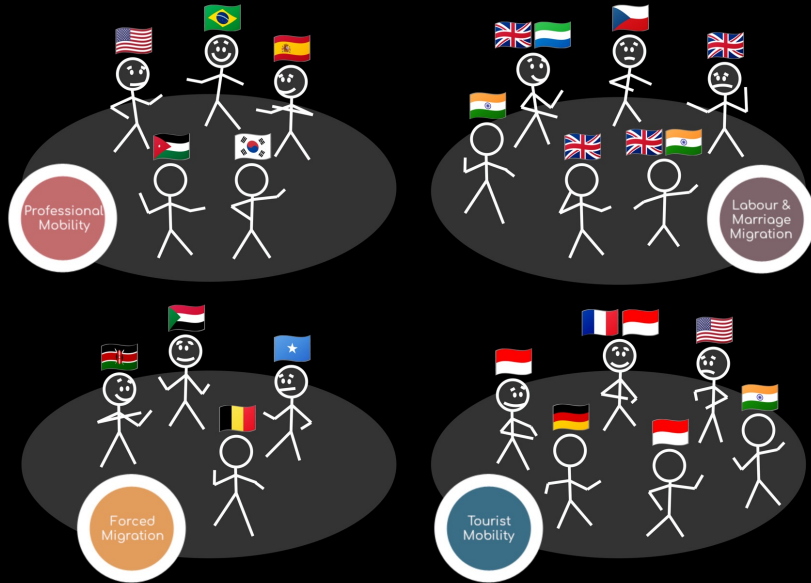


WHO: Tourists (backpackers, world travellers, influencers, volunteers, honeymooners, tour groups, jetsetters) and their two deaf guides

WHERE: Bali, Lombok, Yogyakarta in Indonesia

WHAT: deaf ecosystem, deaf tourism circuit, tourist gaze, reinforcement of inequalities through tourism

Overarching research questions



Question 1: Social how?

Intersection of deaf with nationality, and with race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, religion

Question 2: Communication how?

International communication through calibration, multiple languages, language modalities, and International Sign

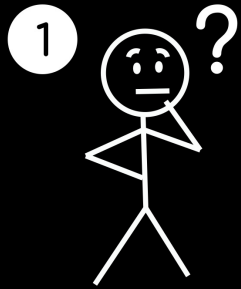


ethnography

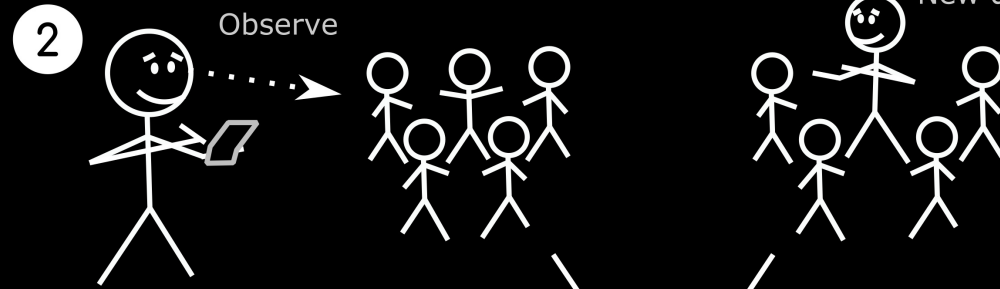
studying
“what people say,
what people say they do,
what they actually do”

Underused in Deaf Studies!

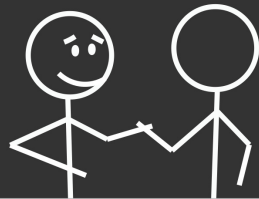
Research question



Participate
New questions

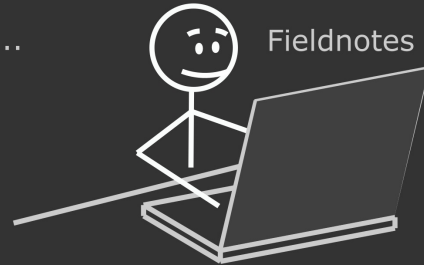


Informed consent



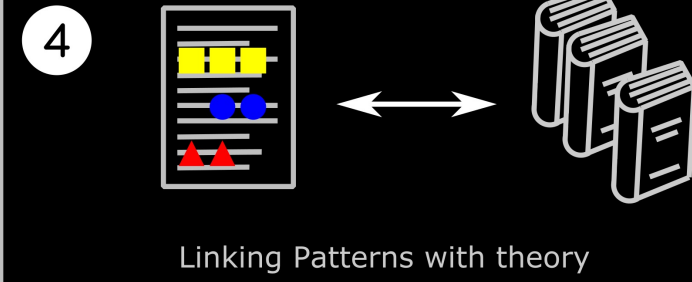
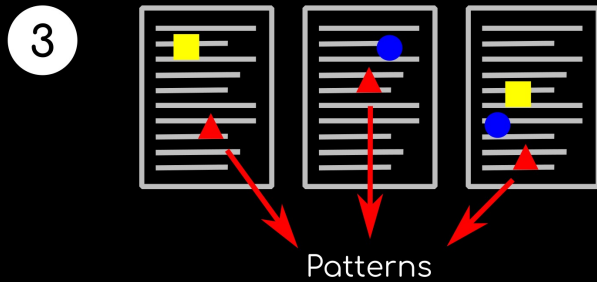
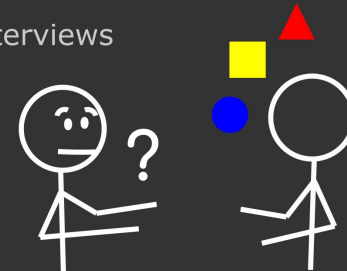
Later...

Fieldnotes

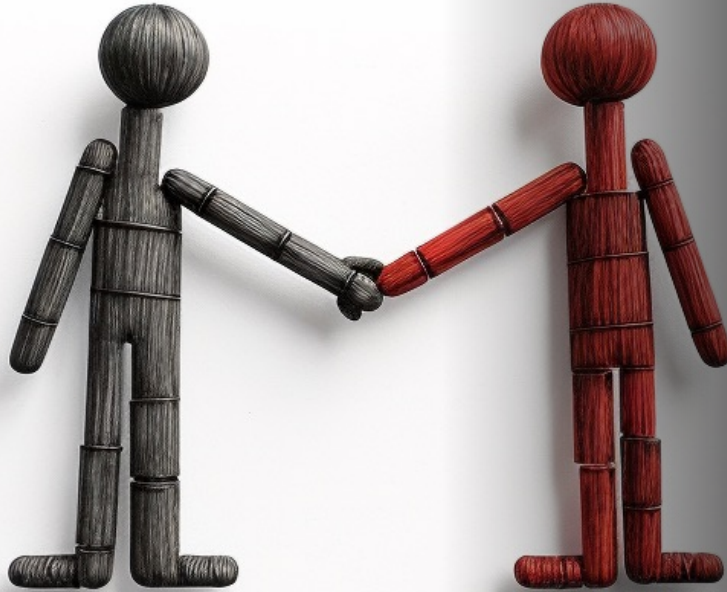


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Interviews



Informed consent



- **Consent Journey:** From casual chats to formal agreements
- **Customized templates** for each subproject, flexibility with format
- **Anonymity vs. The Spotlight:** Balancing privacy with sharing deaf experiences: case-by-case decisions

Interviewing



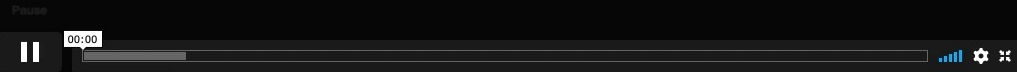
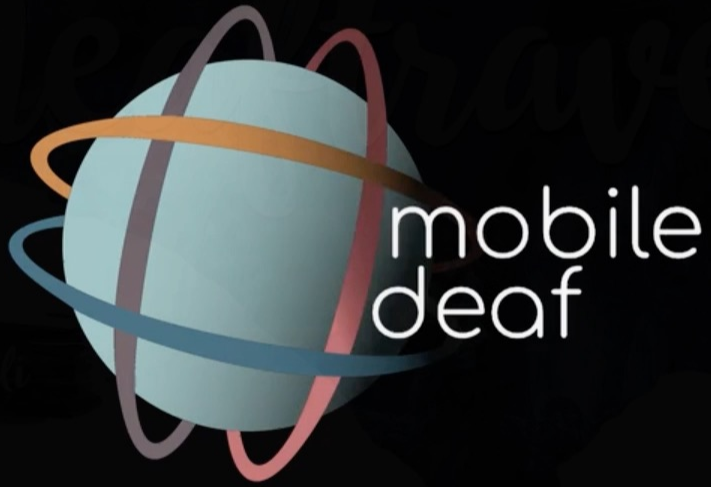
- **Mix & Match:** Different blends of interviews and participant observation per subproject
- **Interview types:**
 - **Ethnographic** interviews
 - **Semi-structured:** Pre-set questions, but room for improvisation.
 - **Acquaintance interviews:** Deeper, more honest answers.
- **But: No echo chambers:**
 - Kaleidoscope of deaf experiences
 - Bringing underrepresented stories to light.

The birth of a genre: deaf ethnographic film

- Documentaries stemming from deep ethnographic **research** (eg. Bali: after 4 m)
- **Deaf-Led**: Deaf individuals drive every step, from research to editing.
- **Deaf Gaze**: Camera focuses on sign language
- **Cameraman Plus**: Camera operator plays an active role as a Research Assistant.
- **Sign-First Editing**: Prioritizing sign language over voiceovers and sound.



Finding spaces
to belong





Behind the Lens

- Bali: people are on holiday!
- Relationship-Building: Key to successful interviews and capturing impromptu data
- "Why do you need to film so much?"
- Film or Not to Film: Making decisions
- Unplugged Moments: Time away from the camera is vital
- Snapshot Dilemma: Group photos – in or out?





This is IS

An ethnographic film series on International Sign
by Annelies Kusters & Jorn Rijckaert



episode one
International Sign unpacked

This is IS
An ethnographic film series on International Sign
by Annelies Kusters & Jorn Rijckaert



episode two
Is this International Sign?

This is IS
An ethnographic film series on International Sign
by Annelies Kusters & Jorn Rijckaert



episode three
International Sign crash course

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episode four
Is IS more visual?

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episode five
One size fits all?

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An ethnographic film series on International Sign
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episode six
Easy come, easy go?

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An ethnographic film series on International Sign
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vimeo



00:00



Variations in filming conditions



Time constraints during events



Naomi Bearne
research assistance



Dawn Jani Birley
research assistance & interviews

Co-researchers: observations and recruiting, guiding, co-interviewing



Jordan Fenlon
interview support



Sujit Sahasrabudhe
research assistance



Finding spaces to belong



- **Pandemic: unforeseen pause:** Filming break deepened the narrative
- **Time capsule approach:** Four protagonists' personal evolution from 2019 to 2023
- **Protagonists:** Lenka (Czechia), Samba (Sierra Leone), Luis (Guatemala), Sana (India)
- **Migration & Belonging:** Unraveling the evolving essence of 'home'





- iPhone with gimbal, or photo camera:
 - less intrusive (Bali, London)
 - good for enclosed/tight spaces (Bali)
- Large camera:
 - "press team" (WFD, Deaflympics, Clin d'Oeil)
 - informing people of presence
- Two cameras to film interactions from different angles

