Introduction: What Is Film Literacy?

The Film-Literate Viewer (the Goal of the Whole Effort)

Such a viewer does four things:

- **Decodes:** Knows that audiovisual content is not neutral. Reads critically what it includes and what it deliberately leaves out.
- **Perceives and evaluates:** Watches with concentration. Reasons from the form of the film rather than stopping at 'boring' or 'just a laugh'.
- **Searches and chooses:** Does not follow algorithms blindly. Knows what they choose to watch and why.
- **Shares and discusses:** Sees film as an opportunity for a shared experience. Can talk about it and recommend it.

Three Dimensions of Literacy

- **Perceptual, or the viewing dimension (foundation):** Aesthetic sensitivity and an eye for the components of a film: visual details, sound, rhythm.
- **Social and participatory, or the sharing dimension (foundation):** Discussion with others, intergenerational reach, sharing.
- **Productive, or the creative dimension (optional extension):** Making your own cut or version of a scene (on a phone or from printed frames) – the most direct way to see how a film is made.

The Asymmetry of Viewing and Making

We are all viewers, but only some of us are creators, so reaching the goal requires sharing the work across different roles:

- **The creator** releases material and shows their decisions (revealing the process of 'how it was made').
- **A cinema or festival** provides a safe, focused space and a shared experience away from classroom bustle, and can mediate between creators and schools. It can offer an introduction, discussion and working material, but cannot build the methodology without an educator.
- **The teacher** provides context and methodology and ensures the session runs smoothly.

What You Will Find in the Toolkit

Three sets (for cinema operators, teachers and filmmakers), five sheets each plus appendices. Start with sheet 1 of your set; the common appendix Age and Audience applies to all.

The toolkit focuses on film because it follows the AC LAB (Audiovisual Connect LAB) definition of film literacy. The same lessons apply beyond film: deliberate choices shape the images and sounds in TV series and social media videos, and the algorithms that recommend what to watch are not neutral.