

Overview of Role

The standby art director represents the art department team on set. They act as the eyes and ears of the production designer (PD) and art department on set as a film or TV production is created. They break down the script set by set, list all set requirements, props required, including graphics, animals, vehicles, food and drink. They give this checklist to the prop master, supervising art director (SAD) and set decorator (SD). Standby art directors may fulfil multiple roles on set, coordinating set moves, checking paint finishes and ageing as seen on camera, checking on set decoration and props, assisting with continuity, or even stepping in to make a prop or graphic at the last minute. They work closely with the first assistant director (1st AD), director of photography (DOP) and the director.

Core Responsibilities:

These core responsibilities are provided as a guide and are not exhaustive. The exact responsibilities in a particular job will vary depending on the scale / budget band / genre of the production.

1. Confirm production designs

- Prepare their own script breakdown including details of action props, scripted graphics, special physical effects (SFX), visual effects (VFX), stunts, construction, and dressing notes
- Meet with the production designer (PD), supervising art director (SAD), art directors (AD), set decorator, props and graphics teams to be briefed on all sets and features prior to shoot
- Attend technical recces

2. Oversee sets during shooting

- Check the set against the script breakdown and ensure that everything required for the day is ready and at hand
- Monitor each shot line up and check for mistakes
- Coordinate any on-set adjustments
- Take and log continuity photos to establish the finishes, dressing, props and ageing of the set for continuity and quality control
- Coordinate the preparation of the set for the following day, checking the props, graphics and set changes as required
- Act as link between the art department and shooting crew, providing regular updates or change requests to the PD or SAD or AD
- Maintain integrity of the set, ensuring it remains clean and clear and properly dressed

- Manage a team of standby crew as required
- Ensure all continuity photos have been uploaded and logged correctly for wrap

3. Comply with health and safety requirements on set

- Read and observe the risk assessments (RA) for any new day of filming
- Check for any set changes, working at height, extra labour or equipment requirements
- Ensure only licensed crew operate any machinery on set
- Assess new hazards from changes to scenery
- Wear appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) as required

Role Specific Skills:

- Brief concept interpretation and breakdown
- Establish a good working relationship with the shooting crew as the art department lead on set
- Ability to read and interpret technical drawings
- Able to make or adapt props or graphics, for example, at short notice as required by the production (especially applicable to lower budget productions)

Other / Transferable Skills:

- Communication: interpreting other's requirements and communicating requirements to other departments and colleagues
- Teamworking: collaborating within own and with other departments, liaising with props, construction, key grip, gaffer and rigging teams
- Networking: investing time in networking activities, building a network of business contacts and establishing rapport with others quickly and effectively
- Problem-solving: contingency planning and resolving issues with sets so that productions remain on schedule

Attributes:

- Resilience and enthusiasm: adapt positively to changing work priorities and patterns, ensuring deadlines continue to be met. Proactive and explores new ideas and non-standard ways of working which will enhance and deliver the best results for the production

- Productivity: organises work effectively and achieves required results within deadlines. Demonstrates the drive and energy to get things done in pressurised situations and escalates appropriately when necessary
- Ethics and integrity: honest and principled in all of their actions and interactions. Respectful and inclusive of others, and meets the ethical requirements of their profession
- Flexibility: willing to both listen and learn and to accept changing priorities and working requirements and has the flexibility to maintain high standards in a changing production environment
- Professional development: develop an ethos to learn and seek out learning and networking opportunities, identifying those that will be most beneficial