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What kind of scenery attempts to depict, in great detail, a specific time and place in the observable world where the play's events are presumed to take place? realistic scenery The development of _____ fostered the great period of scenery design.

The larger Roman theatres were also outdoors, but the added luxury of a coloured awning stretched over the spectators softened the glare of the sun. Later, in the Middle Ages, miracle plays and mystery plays were primarily performed outdoors on the front steps of the church and the adjoining square, although the first dramatized biblical scenes were performed as part of, or following, mass inside the church. There is no record that these scenes were lighted any differently from the mass itself. In England the pageant wagon, complete with actors and properties, was drawn through the main street of a town. Until the 16th century, the theatre continued to be mainly an outdoor institution. Under the patronage of the aristocracy in Italy, private performances, pageants, and tableaux began to be given indoors. Sebastiano Serlio, an Italian architect, gave considerable attention to theatre design, and in a treatise written in he discussed theatre construction and the creation of lighting effects. He recommended placing candles and torches behind flasks filled with amber- and blue-coloured water. Artificial light, produced mainly by candles, was used in several indoor theatres to light the stage and the auditorium. In the early 17th century, Inigo Jones introduced several innovations in lighting and stagecraft, using reflectors to intensify the light sources and making use of colour on stage. He describes the use of oil lamps and candles set in a row along the front edge of the stage but out of sight of the audience, and he also mentions vertical rows of lamps behind each wing at the sides of the stage. The common method of lighting the stage and auditorium was by means of tallow candles. As seen in old prints, these candles were mounted in crude hoops or chandeliers, which were hoisted aloft on pulleys to hang in dripping splendour. Gold decorations applied to the interior of the auditorium caught the many reflections. The inconvenience of the lighting system was that candles were expensive and hard to control. The twisted wicks had to be constantly trimmed during the performance, and this was the duty of the snuff boy. A transformation from light to darkness was effected by the agile skill of the candle snuffers. When David Garrick used footlights at the Drury Lane Theatre in , he masked the candles with metal screens. By , when Richard Brinsley Sheridan managed the Drury Lane, all lights used to illuminate the stage were out of sight, hidden by the now familiar wings and borders. The floating oil wick lamp was replaced after by the Argand oil lamp, in which the cylindrical wick was enclosed in a glass chimney to steady the flame and provide a brighter, whiter, and cleaner light source. The chimneyed oil lamp eventually replaced the candle, but it was still hung in clusters above and bracketed to the walls. At the Haymarket Theatre in London, the oil lamps had chimneys of white and green glass that were controlled by levers, so that raising or lowering the chimneys could effect light changes. Stage design and stagecraft had now advanced as far as was technically possible under the limitations of low-intensity stage lighting. The first major advance in several centuries was the introduction of gas lighting. Near the end of the 18th century, the Scottish engineer William Murdock developed a practical method to distill gas from coal for illumination. The first successful adaptation of gas lighting for the stage was demonstrated in the Lyceum Theatre, London, in by a German, Frederick Winsor. The Chestnut Street Opera House in Philadelphia installed a gas lighting system in and supplied its own gas by installing a gas generator on the premises. Gas stations and city mains did not come into use before The advantages of gas lighting were immediately realized and exploited, despite the initial cost. No new methods of lighting, however, were devised for stage lighting. The conventions remained the same: Even without a chimney, an open gas jet flame was brighter than oil lamps or candles. The additional advantage was control; by varying the control valves from a central point, a smooth increase or decrease of light could be effected, and at variable speeds. For the first time, to add to the realism of the play, the auditorium lights could be darkened. Elaborate central control systems were devised, with a main regulator, branch mains, secondary regulators, and valves.

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But there were also disadvantages to gas: Protective codes were soon established that necessitated the use of guards, screens, and glass chimneys. In , after the introduction of electric lighting, the incandescent gas mantle was developed see incandescent lamp. Although the mantle greatly improved the quality of lightâ€”which was brighter and whiterâ€”the hazards of fire still remained. Although Thomas Drummond , a British engineer, invented the limelight in , it did not come into general use until some 30 years later. A limelight produces light by directing a sharp point of oxyhydrogen flame against a cylindrical block of lime. The tiny area of lime becomes incandescent and emits a brilliant white light that is soft and mellow. As the block of lime is slowly consumed by burning, it has to be slowly and constantly turned by an operator to supply the flame with a fresh surface. Since the brilliant area was very small, the addition of a mirrored reflector was necessary to give accurate control. The intensity of the limelight permitted it to be directed onto the stage from the auditorium. Since it offered control as well as intensity, the limelight was quickly adapted to follow individual performers around the stage. The sharpness produced by the small point source made possible the creation of realistic effects, such as sunlight and moonlight, and moving effects, such as clouds, water, and fire. Electrification An advance of great importance was the introduction of the electric carbon- arc lamp , which was exhibited in experimental form in by Sir Humphry Davy. Most important, the company made the earliest spotlight , a carbon arc and reflector housed in a hood, which included a lens and a shutter. The next great advance in lighting was the development of the incandescent electric lamp, in which light is produced by a filament electrically heated to incandescence. The invention of a practical electric lamp by Thomas Edison in marked the beginning of the modern era of stage lighting. Two years later, at the Electrotechnical Exposition in Munich, a small theatre was erected that used electric lighting exclusively for both stage and auditorium. The success of the experiment received worldwide acclaim. In London the Savoy Theatre was the first to install the new lights; in Boston the Bijou Theatre followed the new trend in . The following year the Landestheatre in Stuttgart, the Residenztheatre in Munich, and the Vienna State Opera were among the first completely electrified theatres. At the turn of the 20th century, incandescent lamps were in almost universal use for stage lighting, but no new methods or techniques of lighting appeared. The conventional footlights, borderlights, and striplights were merely electrified, and the arc light was used for concentrated light sources. Gradually, new improvements provided brighter lamps that were both more durable mechanically and available in larger wattages. Metallic filaments replaced carbon, and in drawn tungsten filament lamps appeared. The use of inert gas in place of a vacuum produced lamps of even higher efficiency and larger sizes. The introduction of concentrated coil filaments made practical the development of the incandescent spotlight. The refinement of the incandescent spotlight added an exciting new tool for the advancement of stage lighting and the further development of stagecraft. Gradually the arc spotlight was replaced by the new incandescent spotlight, which, in turn, gave way to the tungsten-halogen lamp. In his music dramas, German composer Richard Wagner suggested new possibilities for the use of light and design in a unified productionâ€”a lyrical synthesis. Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig gave tremendous impetus to the new plastic stagecraft. They conceived of the stage as a cubic volume of space bathed in a continuous play of functioning light. All the vast optical effects of Baroque design previously obtained with paint were now possible by means of light. Hoffman; in the Theatermuseum, Munich. Courtesy of Theatermuseum, Munich Wagner, Richard: The simulation of natural lighting was remarkable, but the entire mechanism was too bulky and intricate and required the construction of a special theatre. In the course of his experiments, Fortuny evolved a dome-shaped cyclorama , its rear wall surfaced in plaster. Flooded with light, it gave the illusion of infinite space and was the perfect means of simulating spectacular sky and background effects. Because it was dome-shaped, however, it occupied a large amount of stage space and tended to distort optical projections. In modified form, as a curved, hanging cyclorama, it became an indispensable tool of the new stagecraft. Earlier, Sir Henry Irving had used transparent coloured lacquers to coat lamps to produce colour effects, using separate circuits for each colour. Irving was also the first producer to introduce organized light rehearsals in his productions. David Belasco , with his electrician Louis Hartman , developed a standard of realism in stage

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lighting that anticipated the motion picture and went on to dominate the 20th century. In their lighting laboratory, Belasco and Hartman developed and refined many new lighting instruments. Individual sources were developed and used to light the acting areas from above the stage as well as from the auditorium. There are two methods used to control the flow of electrical current through a dimmer: Mechanically controlled dimmers require the physical manipulation of an axle running through the core of the dimmer to adjust current flow. An electronically controlled dimmer uses a low-voltage control system to adjust the current flow in the high-voltage load circuit. The advantage of electronic control is that it allows the dimmer to be controlled from a remote location. There are three basic types of mechanically controlled dimmers: The resistance dimmer was the first commercially successful theatrical dimmer. Developed in the late 19th century, it was portable, efficient, and extremely rugged, and, because it ran equally well on both alternating current AC and direct current DC power, the resistance dimmer survived for decades as the standard in commercial theatre throughout the world; its use was in general decline after the s. By the end of the 20th century, it was no longer being used. A saturable core dimmer uses a small DC current to magnetize an iron core through which AC current flows. As the level of magnetism increases, the conductivity of the core also increases; more AC load current is thus able to pass through it, and any lights connected to the dimmer will come on. Like the resistance dimmer, however, the saturable core dimmer is no longer used. The autotransformer dimmer controls current flow by varying the voltage in the circuit. It was rarely used to control stage lights, but at the turn of the 21st century it was still being used in some theatres to control house lights. The first electronically controlled dimmer was the thyatron tube dimmer, developed by George Izenour in It was the first dimmer to make use of gatingâ€”a rapid turning on and off of the current flowing through the load circuitâ€”to control light output and intensity. The thyatron vacuum tubes were large and noisy, and they required a considerable warm-up period before they worked properly. They also needed frequent maintenance, did not last very long, and were expensive. But the demonstration that the gating principle could be used for effective intensity control paved the way for silicon-controlled rectifier SCR dimmers. The magnetic amplifier dimmer, developed in the s, was in essence a saturable core dimmer that used electronic, rather than mechanical, control to vary the level of magnetism in its iron core. While it was an improvement over the saturable core dimmerâ€”because the electronic control allowed the dimmer to be remotely controlled â€”its control circuit needed almost daily maintenance to run properly.

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Chapter 2 : Ghosts, by Ibsen - Set Design and Lighting Design by Richard Finkelstein, Stage Designer

Although only a minority of plays refer to theatrical matters directly, all plays and play productions can be usefully analyzed and evaluated on the way they use the theatrical format to best advantage and make us rethink the nature of theatrical production.

Term[edit] The earliest known use of the term "properties" in English to refer to stage accessories is in the CE morality play , The Castle of Perseverance. Many performers provided their own costumes, but special items—stage weapons, furniture or other hand-held devices—were considered "company property"; hence the term "property. Bland Wade, a properties director, says, "A coffee cup onstage is a coffee cup on television, is a coffee cup on the big screen. Technically, a prop is any object that gives the scenery, actors, or performance space specific period, place, or character. Props in a production originate from off stage unless they have been preset on the stage before the production begins. The person in charge of handling the props is generally called the "props master". Other positions also include coordinators, production assistants and interns as may be needed for a specific project. Modern usage[edit] The term has readily transferred to television , motion picture and video game production, where they are commonly referred to by the phrase movie prop, film prop or simply prop. However, a prop must "read well" from the house or on-screen, meaning it must look real to the audience. Many real objects are poorly adapted to the task of looking like themselves to an audience, due to their size, durability, or color under bright lights, so some props are specially designed to look more like the actual item than the real object would look. In some cases, a prop is designed to behave differently from how the real object would, often for the sake of safety. Examples of special props are: A prop sack representing a burlap bag , might have another black fabric bag sewn, discreetly inside the burlap, giving it strength, hiding the contents and creating a visual void to the audience view. In the theater, prop weapons are almost always either non-operable replicas, or have safety features to ensure they are not dangerous. Guns fire caps or noisy blanks, swords are dulled, and knives are often made of plastic or rubber. In film production, fully functional weapons are mostly used, but typically only with special smoke blanks with blank adapted guns instead of real bullets. Real cartridges with bullets removed are still dangerously charged which has caused several tragic instances when used on stage or film. The safety and proper handling of real weapons used as movie props is the premiere responsibility of the prop master. ATF and other law enforcement agencies may monitor the use of real guns for film and television, but this is generally not necessary with stage props as these guns are permanently "plugged". Breakaway objects, or stunt props, such as balsa -wood furniture, or sugar glass mock-glassware made of crystallized sugar whose breakage and debris look real but rarely cause injury due to their light weight and weak structure. Even for such seemingly safe props, very often a stunt double will replace the main actor for shots involving use of breakaway props. Rubber bladed-weapons and guns are examples of props used by stuntmen to minimize injury, or by actors where the action requires a prop which minimizes injury. The hero prop may have legible writing, lights, moving parts, or other attributes or functions missing from a standard prop; a hero prop phaser from the Star Trek franchise, for example, might include a depressible trigger and a light-up muzzle and display panel all of which would make the hero prop more expensive and less durable. The term is also used on occasion for any of the items that a main character would carry in film and television which are often hero props in the first sense as well. The term may sometimes be used in stage production, as many props from film find their way into theatre from common rental and purchase shops. Small Stage Properties and Furniture.

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Chapter 3 : Theatrical property - Wikipedia

Theatre props Stage props Toy theatre Theatre Stage Stage & Set Design Set design theatre Forest scenery Theatre Production Christmas pageant Forward LOVE this stage scenery.

European and American theatre History In comparison with the history of Western theatre, the history of scenic design is short. Whereas the golden age of Greek theatre occurred more than two millennia ago, the intensive use of scenery in the theatre did not begin until after 1800, and the position of scenic designer—the individual responsible for the visual appearance and function of the scenic and property elements of a theatrical production—did not become a commonly credited production position until the mid-19th century. The term scenery can include any noncostume visual element used in support of a production. In the context of this article, however, it will be defined as any nonpermanent two- or three-dimensional background or environmental element that is placed on the stage so as to suggest the historical period, locale, and mood of the play being performed. There was very little scenery used in Western theatres before the early 19th century. While Greek and Roman plays were performed outdoors in elaborate and imposing structures, there is little physical evidence to suggest that scenery, as defined above, was used on these stages. Mansions were often mounted in the nave of a church, on a platform in front of a church, or in a town square. They were also used in combination with pageant wagons, which usually held between one and three mansions, were pulled from location to location, and were arranged to create the appropriate setting. The Renaissance was a time of development and experimentation in the arts. This creative reawakening affected the design of theatre structures as well as scenery. Some theatres, such as the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, Italy, had permanent sets built as part of their theatre architecture. Others, such as the Globe Theatre in London, had bare, open stages with no permanent scenic elements. Between the mid-16th and the mid-17th century, numerous theatres were built in cities and towns and on private estates throughout Europe. Opera houses were frequently among the first municipal buildings erected in the new towns and cities that were springing up in the American and Canadian landscape during the 18th century. The overwhelming majority of these theatres had proscenium picture-frame stages. The manner in which the scenery was created for these theatres was generally determined by the extent of the production program of the producing organization. Theatres with permanent companies and expansive production programs—La Scala in Milan, Covent Garden Theatre in London, and many European court theatres, for instance—employed resident artists to build and paint the scenery. Producing organizations with less-extensive production programs, such as traveling troupes, either employed itinerant artists and craftsmen or ordered stock scenery from manufacturers that existed in almost all major and many medium-sized cities in both Europe and North America by the middle of the 18th century. The stock sets produced by these manufacturers were not tailored to the specific needs of any particular play but instead depicted locations that were standard to most: After the play closed, the set was put into storage until another play required a street scene; the set would then be reused, usually with little, if any, modification. In the mid-19th century a movement that was to reshape the theatrical world began. This movement, realism, which began partly as a reaction to the melodramas of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, produced some of the first plays that focused on social issues in the lives of ordinary citizens rather than on the actions of the aristocracy and monarchs. This shift of thematic focus caused a major innovation in scenery. Realism demanded sets that more faithfully reproduced everyday life. Beginning in the mid-19th century, realistic interior and exterior sets proliferated, and the level of spectacle seemed determined only by the scenic budget. The realism movement of the 19th century had brought realistic details to scenic design. But this focus on historical accuracy resulted in scenery that too frequently became more important than the play itself. Modern European and American scenic design tries to help the audience understand and connect with a play by visually reinforcing all of these aspects. By the start of the 20th century, the design and production of stage scenery had become fairly standardized. The producer and the director—along with, sometimes, the playwright or the lead actor—created a ground plan of the required

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settings and contracted with a scenic production house to make the scenery. The staff of the scenic production house then created painted models of the sets and, after final approval, created scale drawings from which the scenery was built. Frequently the scenery was constructed by one company and painted by another. Permanent producing theatres with active production programs often employed in-house carpenters and scenic artists to create the scenery. By the turn of the 21st century, however, most scenic production studios—whether in-house or independent—had become all-inclusive, in that they built and painted almost all the scenery and many of the properties needed for a production. Specialty items—such as elements that needed engineering trusses, elevators, and so forth, as well as period furniture and complex items that required specialized fabrication techniques and equipment—were frequently subcontracted to appropriate businesses. Role of the scenic designer

Approaches to contemporary scenic design procedure are fairly uniform throughout the Western world. One guideline is generally followed: The terms mood and spirit can be further defined. Spirit refers to the production concept—the style or manner in which a particular production is to be presented, as decided by the production design team. The director and producer almost always create the initial production concept. The designer also typically engages in research into the history of the period depicted in the play to learn not only the visual style of the period but its social context as well. The scenic designer also attends numerous production meetings in which budgets, the production venue, and the details of the play and its production are discussed. The scenic designer, after synthesizing the information gathered from the script and the various production meetings, normally creates a series of thumbnail sketches that show the major outline, character, and feeling of the sets. These sketches are discussed in additional production meetings and modified as necessary. After a preliminary design has been approved, the scenic designer creates colour renderings and, sometimes, cardboard models of the designs. Again, these renderings and models may be modified as a result of additional discussions. After final approval of the design, scale drawings of the sets are created and provided to the production studio for construction of the scenery. At the turn of the 21st century, many scenic designers still preferred to work with traditional materials and techniques—pencil, paper, ink, paint, and pastel—but an increasing number used computers to do their sketches and drafting. The advantages of computer drawing proved to be numerous. Designers were able to create and quickly modify sketches and final colour renderings of the settings. Computer drafting also allowed the designer to create very accurate and easily modified elevations views of a set as if seen from ground level and ground plans as if seen from above. Likewise, computers enabled designers for the first time to create a three-dimensional view of a set and its location relative to the permanent structures of a theatre in a manner that allowed the set to be viewed from any seat. Such a view greatly aided designers in determining hanging positions for the various elements that prevent the audience from seeing backstage. Computer software also permitted the designer to create real-time animations that choreographed the sometimes extremely complex movements of scenic elements that take place during some scene shifts.

Asian theatre Throughout history, Western theatre has been significantly influenced by religion, probably because, in almost all Western cultures, theatrical presentations began as an outgrowth of local religious practices. The origins of Western theatre. Dominant religions in other areas of the world similarly influenced theatrical activities. For example, in regions where Islam is the primary religion, the development of theatre faced prohibitions against the presentation of images of living beings. Nonetheless, popular plays based on folkloric themes thrived. These performances did not occur in theatres or use scenery. The only staging elements employed were, at most, a rug laid on the ground and a canopy suspended overhead. Shadow puppets, so-called because the audience sees only the shadows of the puppets projected on a cloth screen, thrived by sidestepping Islamic prohibitions. Like other forms of popular theatre in the Arabic-speaking world, shadow-puppet theatre uses no scenery. Theatre in India benefited from a dominant religion Hinduism that encouraged theatre. Presentations and ritual performances seem to have been common in India from earliest times. The theatres, most of which were rectangular, were divided equally between the auditorium and the stage. The stage was also divided into two equal parts: The performing stage was separated from backstage by a wall with two doorways. The area between the doorways, and much of the stage, was

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decorated with symbolic paintings and carvings. No scenery was used. The theatres used for the performances of Indian folk plays normally have an open stage, devoid of scenery, that is surrounded on three sides by the audience. Prior to the 10th century, public entertainments resembled modern circuses or variety shows in their combination of music, dance, and displays of athletic skills. The Chinese literary theatre, marked by its script-based production style as opposed to the more improvisational theme-based folk theatre that had been in vogue, began during the Yuan dynasty. The staging for this type of theatre is similar to that of Indian theatre. A painting dated shows an essentially bare stage; a decorative wall hanging is depicted at the centre of the wall at the rear of the stage, and two doorways are on either side of the hanging. No scenery is used in the performance of Chinese classical theatre today, although there are historical records of props such as tables and chairs being employed. In Japan, Noh drama began developing in earnest in the 12th and 13th centuries, and its form was essentially set by the early s. Very little about this dramatic form has since changed. The shape, style, and dimensions of the Noh stage are closely prescribed, and there is no scenery used. Kabuki, which borrowed heavily from the Noh and other art forms, was very popular with the merchant and lower classes, while Noh performances were reserved for the samurai and noble classes. Kabuki performers at first used the Noh stage but soon began to modify it. Originally relegated to outdoor performances on temporary stages, Kabuki troupes were in permitted by the government to use enclosed theatres. The advent of such theatres encouraged the development of advanced stage machinery, including elevator traps, elevator stages, and revolving stages. The development of these complex mechanical systems coincided with the introduction of scenery into Kabuki theatre. As the stage machinery became more sophisticated, concentric revolving stages were first used in, for instance, scenic elements became more and more complex. Interior of a Kabuki theatre, coloured woodcut triptych by Utagawa Toyokuni, c. Courtesy of the trustees of the British Museum Unlike other theatre traditions in Asia, Kabuki makes extensive use of scenery, which is used to characterize every locale. But there is a significant difference between scenery used in Western theatre and that used in Kabuki. Where Western scenery typically attempts to create the illusion of place by transforming the stage into that place, Kabuki scenery instead decorates the stage. As a result, locale is suggested in Kabuki theatre rather than created. To help support this nonillusionary premise, Kabuki scenery is changed in full view of the audience by means of a revolving stage, elevator traps and stages, grooves, and visible stage attendants. Stage machinery Stage machinery can be divided into two general categories: There are three general types of stage configurations: Both open and arena stages generally have a permanent lighting grid—a network of steel pipes used for hanging lighting instruments—above the stage and auditorium spaces. All three types of theatre can have permanent stage machinery—such as flying systems, revolving stages, and slip stages—although most such machinery is associated with the proscenium stage. Flying systems Flying systems are an important piece of stage machinery for proscenium-stage theatres. These systems are used to lift or fly scenery from the stage into a space above the stage the fly loft by means of mechanical hoists. There are two main types of flying systems: Hand-operated systems can be further subdivided into two types:

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Chapter 4 : Stagecraft - Stage lighting | calendrierdelascience.com

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Just bang a few pieces of wood together and paint them and off we go! The reality is that most amateur designs are too ambitious to ever be built successfully and even less likely to work for a given production. Before you volunteer to build that set, know what steps to take to be successful. Where does the action take place? Will movements of scenery be required? How many scenes are they and how long is each? Complex scene shifts interfere with plays that have complex scene structures. Save the big scene shifts for a play that has long scenes and benefits from awe-inspiring scene changes. Talk to the director to get her ideas before read-throughs. Too often, amateur actors and directors start off rehearsing without a clear idea of what the set is going to look like. Insist that the director sit down with you to discuss her concept of the play and how she "sees" the actors interacting with the set. This could mean blocking movements that actors will be told to make or what feeling the director wants to convey to set the action for the play. Agree on a budget and set a conference to go over your plans so the director can block accurately the first time. Consider points of view. You want an artistic set. The actors need a usable set. Make a list of things the set has to have, including different levels Greek and Shakespearean tragedies , specific historical design elements like *The Crucible* or special effects as in *The Haunting of Hill House*. Decide what kinds of areas will best serve the action of the play and the movements of the characters. Determine style and color scheme for your set. Vacuum-formed and foam structural products have become very popular but the old one-by-four batten and canvas flats are still useful for realistic or "battle" sets. Canvas and felt can be used to cover platforms and minimize noise. Beyond that, use your own creativity and inventiveness and dispatch your minions to scavenge. Drapery and set dressing can be picked up at sales. Check garage sales for hardware and props. A lot of out-of style furniture and household items can be altered, painted or slip-covered for a new life in agreement with your design. Add details or create props in paper-mache or fiber glass. Tape out a floor plan immediately, so the actors can use it as soon as possible. Erect flats, platforms and other structural elements as they are finished. Furniture, dressing and props. Establish a schedule with deadlines for everything. Tip Unfortunately, there are lots of examples but few instructions for set building on the web. Search for "theatrical supplies" and "theatrical stage building supplies" for materials. Invest in a good book on stage construction if you plan to build more than one set. Gillette and Michael Gillette is a classic compendium. Building a scale model and doing construction drawings gives your crew instructions as to how to build and what the finished set should look like. Warning Know your limitations. Identify your die-hard participants early and give them ownership positions Avoid overbuilding by checking with the experts before using two-by-fours for everything. About the Author An avid perennial gardener and old house owner, Laura Reynolds has had careers in teaching and juvenile justice. A retired municipal judge Reynolds holds a degree in communications from Northern Illinois University. Her six children and stepchildren served as subjects of editorials during her tenure as a local newspaper editor.

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Chapter 5 : Introduction to Theatre -- The Design Team

Theatrical Scenery: Preparing a Scenic Drop: This Instructable shows the first part in the process of painting a scenic drop. Later Instructables will show the drawing and painting techniques used.

Most critics believe the play was written for and performed at an aristocratic wedding, with Queen Elizabeth I in attendance. Scholars estimate the play was written in or when Shakespeare was 31 or 32 years old, at approximately the same time as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard II*. Critics have wondered if *Romeo and Juliet* is a serious reinterpretation of the other play, or just the opposite: Perhaps Shakespeare is mocking his tragic love story through the burlesque of *"Pyramus and Thisbe"*. The fairies that dance and frolic throughout this play were most likely derived from English folk tradition. On the one hand, these creatures have a sinister side – Puck, for example, is also known as Robin Goodfellow, a common name for the devil – but they can also be viewed as fun-loving nature spirits, aligned with a benevolent Mother Nature.

Performance History The first Quarto edition of the play, printed in 1611, announces that it was "sundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Its spectacle and its emphasis on dance and magic and song have led it to be interpreted and performed in a variety of ways. The play has also seen many famous, and often infamous, interpretations. Most modern productions of the play, including the film, emphasize its erotic, savage undertones.

Structure of the Play Showing his usual dexterity in creating coherent dramatic frameworks, Shakespeare here interweaves four separate plots and four groups of characters. Egeus needs Theseus to adjudicate a dispute he is having with his daughter, Hermia. The second plot features Hermia and her three friends, Helena, Demetrius, and Lysander. Although the lovers have one foot in the conventional world of Athens, the play forces them to confront their own irrational and erotic sides as they move temporarily into the forest outside of Athens. By the end of the play, though, they return to the safety of Athens, perhaps still remembering some of the poetry and chaos of their night in the forest. Ruled by Titania and Oberon, the enchanted inhabitants of the forest celebrate the erotic, the poetic, and the beautiful. While this world provides an enticing sojourn for the lovers, it is also dangerous. All of the traditional boundaries break down when the lovers are lost in the woods. For example, the themes of love and transformation reverberate through all levels of the play, creating coherence and complexity. The action is associated with two traditional festivals – Midsummer Eve and May Day – both allied with magic, mayhem, and merriment. To emphasize further the connections between the different groups, many modern directors of the play cast the same actor for the roles of Theseus and Oberon, and for those of Hippolyta and Titania. More ominously, it tells of the violence often perpetrated in the name of lust: Mythological references to the tales of Philomela and Perogina, for example, remind us that desire results not only in happy, consensual union, but also in rape. Another important theme is the duality between fantasy and reality. Indeed, the play highlights the imagination and its inventions: Shakespeare is concerned with the relationship between imagination and reality and with the way our emotions alter our perceptions. Early in the play, for example, Egeus accuses Lysander of bewitching Hermia with love charms and intriguing songs.

I. Besides weaving together various themes, the play is also intriguing as a spectacle of dance, music, and costume. First, the theaters were of two distinct kinds: The government closely regulated both, but particularly the public theaters. Public theaters such as the one in which Shakespeare made his livelihood were fairly large open-air structures, able to hold about 3,000 people. In order to compete with rival theaters, as well as the popular pastimes of bullbaiting and bearbaiting, acting troupes changed their show bills often, generally daily. They introduced new plays regularly, helping partially explain why about 2,000 plays were written by more than 1,000 dramatists between the closing of the theaters in 1584 and 1642. Public performances generally started in the mid-afternoon so spectators could return home by nightfall. Because of weather, plague, Puritan opposition, and religious observances, theaters often advertised on a day-to-day basis unlike today when we know in advance the dates a show will run. One of the most memorable advertising techniques troupes employed involved running a specific flag atop the theater to signal

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a performance that day a black flag for a tragedy, a red flag for a history, and white flag for a comedy. Scholars estimate that during the first part of the seventeenth century, performances in public theaters took place about days about 7 months each year. Although we commonly associate elaborate lighting and scenery with producing plays, in the public playhouses of Elizabethan England, the only lighting came from natural sources. Public theaters varied in shape circular, octagonal, square , yet their purpose was the same: Most theaters had tree-roofed galleries for spectators, one above the other, surrounding the yard. Each theater was also made up of three distinct seating areas, each increasingly more expensive: These venues were open to the public, but special considerations made it unusual for commoners to attend. First, the private playhouses accommodated only about spectators. In addition, they provided actual seats for patrons, helping to justify a considerably higher admission than the public theaters. Unlike the open-air theaters, private theaters were roofed and lit by candles, allowing for evening performances a time when most commoners needed to be doing chores around their own homes. During performances, too, the private theaters would often separate the acts with musical interludes rather than performing the entire play without any intermissions, as they did in the public theaters.

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Chapter 6 : Metaphor, Style, Practical Considerations and Areas of Influence

"Stage Scenery: It's Construction and Rigging", by Arnold S. Gillette and Michael Gillette is a classic compendium. Building a scale model and doing construction drawings gives your crew instructions as to how to build and what the finished set should look like.

Southern Illinois University Press. An Introduction to Scene Design. Develop a list of basic questions which must be answered before the designer can begin work. Where does the play take place? When does the play take place? What is needed to stage the action? What is the style of the play? Is it realistic or presentational? What is the tone of the work? Is it light or dark? What scenic image metaphor does the script suggest? Briefly discuss the "action-documentation-metaphor" approach to scene design. The "action-documentation-metaphor" approach to design was developed and taught by New York designer Mordecai Gorelik. One of the Fine Arts courses offered was Scene Design. The professor was Mordecai Gorelik. Ten years later he was conducting 12 week workshops in New York City for designers, directors and playwrights. Provide those elements -- doors, windows, steps, furniture -- needed by the director and the actor to stage the show. Locate the action of the play in a specific place -- London, Berlin, New York -- and a specific time period -- , , According to the Free Dictionary, a metaphor is "A figure of speech in which a word In less poetic terms -- the world is a stage. A simile would add the word "like: The metaphor -- home is a gold coin -- can suggest to the designer a color gold, a shape round, a texture metallic. What is the difference between a representational and presentational style? From the Cambridge Guide to Theatre: Representational theatre tries to create an illusion of reality. Presentational theatre emphasizes theatricality and acknowledges the theatre as theatre--there is no illusion. A representational set gives the illusion of reality. Generally it is a realistic representation -- a box set with three walls and a ceiling -- of an architectural interior-- a living room, parlor or kitchen. A presentational set is often a wing-border-backdrop set, a "painted drop" behind the performer. Presentational designs are used in multi-set musicals, plays with an exterior location, and the classical dramas of Shakespeare and Sophocles. What is a box set? An interior set which uses flats to create the back and side walls, and often ceiling, of a "realistic" room. How does it differ from a wing-border-backdrop set? The side flats in a wing-border-backdrop set are placed parallel to the front edge of the stage. In a box set, these "side walls" are turned so they run diagonal from up stage to down stage. Naturalism is characterized by a meticulous recording of detail. It is photographic in nature and like so many photographs taken with no thought to selectivity, often contains material that is unnecessary and distracting. Realism is based on authentic source material but the details have been carefully selected. Some of the elements have been exaggerated for greater effectiveness. Suggestive Realism allows a part of the set to stand for the whole. It is the simplification of a realistic design by the elimination of unnecessary detail. Stylization involves the exaggeration of color, line and mass in the treatment of realistic objects. The designer adapts and arranges the source material to conform to a particular visual style rather than faithfully recording nature. Formalism seeks to create a setting that is pictorial but not representational of period or location. The designer creates an interesting arrangement of "playing spaces," often attempting to return to a completely functional theatre. The scenic styles differ only by the degree in which they vary from reality -- meticulous recording of detail to not representational of any period or location. List five practical considerations a designer must face when designing a set for a play or musical. The play, The theatre and its physical facilities, The budget in both time and money, and The experiences and abilities of the crew. The stage floor -- ramps, steps, platforms To resolve the stage floor into appropriate acting areas is the first major step in designing a production. The Scenographic Imagination, pg. The general background -- walls, wings and borders, backdrops, While the actors do not necessarily involve themselves with the background, they will always be seen in relation to it. This background can be, therefore, at one time, the least important part of the design to the performer and the most potent visual element in terms of what the audience sees. Actors simply cannot compete with a

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background that is too bright or distracting. This is potentially the most dangerous area in which the scenographer works The specific units of scenery -- doors, windows, rocks, trees Doors, windows, platforms, steps, rocks, trees, etc. These elements are one step nearer the actor, both in physical proximity and usefulness to him as an artist. Although there are only a few major categories of furniture that man devised, there are innumerable variations and permutations on these basic forms; he needs something to sit or lie on chairs, benches, stools, beds , something to hold objects and materials for his immediate use tables in various forms , and storage units, something open, often with lids or doors, in which to keep his needs and possessions chests, boxes, shelves. The rectangular stage floor which extends beyond the front edge of the stage; The general background-- the black back drop, the rear wall, V beam and rough timber portal; The specific units of scenery-- the two up stage doors and the center post and The set prop-- the center stage bench. Below is a computer generated rendering of the virtual model. February 12, ; Updated:

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Chapter 7 : As You Like It: was it the world's first sketch show? | Stage | The Guardian

Realism. Theatrical realism was a general movement in 19th-century theatre from the time period of that developed a set of dramatic and theatrical conventions with the aim of bringing a greater fidelity of real life to texts and performances.

Writing the Introduction The introduction should include the following: The title of the play, the name of the playwright, and any pertinent historical information regarding them other similar works from this period? The name of the director, the place and date of the production you attended, and the name of the production company again, do you know of any previous work by this company? The thesis of your review, which should include possibly in more than a single statement the following: A general impression of the relative success or failure of the production, based on what you actually saw and on your initial impression of how the play should have been performed. Note that even if the production did not exactly coincide with your own conception of the play, you should not feel obliged to condemn the performance outright. Be open-minded and willing to weigh pros and cons. Note that this thesis asserts that Papp captured the essence of what is in the text itself -- the expectations set up by the thesis are that the reviewer will then analyze the methods by which the director achieved this effect. Without that sympathy, the play would have been reduced to pure chaos and would have failed to portray an American ideal of freedom. Since you will not be expected to discuss all aspects of the production, focus your thesis on one or two major concerns that the performance has or has not addressed. Read your assignment carefully to find out which aspects of the performance are to be emphasized in your review. You can include this summary in the introduction; or, if you wish to expand the summary, include it in a separate paragraph following the introduction. Writing the Body of the Paper: The Review Remember that in the body of the paper you are obliged to deal specifically with each element of the production that you mentioned in the introduction and thesis. In order to give your review a tight internal logic and cohesiveness, you should also discuss these elements in the order that you outlined in the introduction. For each element that you discuss: In as brief and precise a manner as possible, describe in detail the physical aspects of what you saw performed. Keep in mind at all times that whatever you include must in some way contribute to the assertion you made in your introduction and thesis. Focus on particular scenes or performances that will provide the evidence for your final evaluation of the play. The tempest scene in Lear utilized a particularly hostile set in order to universalize the suffering depicted throughout the play. The lights were dimmed and the backdrop was flat black. Against this backdrop were propped, in no particular order, seven skulls that looked out over the events to come. Note the vivid description of what was seen, and the use of detail to convey that vividness. The passage will work nicely as evidence for an overall, positive evaluation of the production. This part of the paper requires the most thought and organization and consequently receives the most attention from your reader. After you have finished describing important elements of the production, proceed to evaluate them. For example, you would need to answer the following questions regarding the last description of Lear: Why were the lights dimmed at the beginning of the scene? Why was the backdrop painted black? Why was there no order to the skulls? In the evaluation, you are given the opportunity to attack as well as commend the performance; if the production fails to answer questions that you feel need answers, then say so. If the question or problems are relatively minor, ignore them. Writing the Summary and Conclusion Your conclusion should not merely recapitulate your thesis in a mechanical way. Rather, you should try to show why your response to the play is valid and significant, based on what you have described in the body of the paper.

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Chapter 8 : About A Midsummer Night's Dream

Stagecraft: Stagecraft, the technical aspects of theatrical production, which include scenic design, stage machinery, lighting, sound, costume design, and makeup. In comparison with the history of Western theatre, the history of scenic design is short.

The production is directed by Kathy Maes with costumes by Penny Cole. Above is a rendering of the production. The unit set appears within a surround reflecting the connections within the world of the Impressionist Arts movement. For most of the play, the painted backgrounds are obscured by the panels of overgrown vine-like and color-less panels acting like scrims. Above simulates the effect of the drops bleeding thru the scrim streamer panels at the end of the play. Production photo with drops bleeding through. Scenery as it plays through most of the show Description of the Settings: The set for the show was transformational in nature. The image presented to the audience when they entered would change by the end into an entirely new image. I had done this earlier with *As You Like It* which made the change through mechanical means through the use of cut-roll drops. This time I wanted to affect the change entirely through the use of light reacting with the scenery elements. The stage itself consisted of three platform plates: These were painted in a marble pattern. Columns framed the areas helping to define the domestic space. Outside the column areas were texture panels made from layered strips of organically ripped cheesecloth dyed and attached to scenery net. These gave a hint of dead overgrowth and served as scrim. At the end, revealed through the scrim panels were three drops that entirely filled the surround of the stage. These were painted like an impressionistic painting of a lush, sun-drenched forest with a stream running thru it. I feel that the designation of *Ghosts* as an impressionistic work was quite apt and thought provoking. Indeed many parallels could be drawn between the movement in painting and what Ibsen was doing contemporaneously within this work. The text of the play as well is also imbued with images of light and darkness. We decided to approach the imagery of light and darkness in an ironical manner through the scenery elements. We use the moment, at the end of the play, when Oswald goes blind to reveal the full set depicting a sunny world, full of life, color, trees and water. At the moment of blindness, ironically a veil was simultaneously lifted allowing the characters to fully understand the true nature of their lives. The cheesecloth strip scrim panels gave the impression of the growth of vines, overpowering the environment and then freezing in death. The vines though also contain a hint of the forms of dendrites and axons in the brain, in this case too, frozen in an entangled embrace of death. While the rendering appears to emphasize this element, the production photos reveal that when minimally lit, these scrim elements faded out of the stage picture. The feeling on stage was largely one where each actor was isolated in this world of decay from simple neglect and lack of nutrient. With the limited palette of available lighting tools I had to be most economical in my choices. I wanted to be able to emphasize the transition between the pallor of death surrounding the homestead into the world of light reflecting the revelation of understanding that came at the moment of death in the material world. Since I knew that lighting levels would generally be low, I used very light blue gel so that the red-shift at low level would be counteracted. I worked towards a very gray light. I used as well a directional wash of warm light so that the sun could be revealed as the transformation happened. I worked hard with the limited lighting too, to keep the feeling of isolation between the islands of actors without looking affected. Angles of light over the stage proper were kept steep, not only to enhance the drama but to also keep the light off of the scrim panels. I wanted to be able to make them disappear, or to highlight them with their own side-light at moments where we might wish to call attention to them. Still, the translucent nature of the drop allowed for an effective illusion of the fire beyond.

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Chapter 9 : Backdrops Fantastic Theme Backdrops - Forest

Production photo with drops bleeding through Scenery as it plays through most of the show Description of the Settings: The set for the show.

All are a tribute to the creativity and skills of designers and costume makers from the mid 18th century to today, in every kind of live performance - drama, opera, dance, musicals, pantomime, rock and pop, music hall, cabaret, circus. In the 19th century, when realism was the predominant style, the scenery was usually designed by the scene painters. Costumes could be devised by a combination of performer and maker or drawn by a specialist and made by the theatre workshops and outworkers. The 20th century saw the emergence of the career designer, and then the setting up of training courses. But stage design is still an uncertain job and even today, designers often combine theatre work with a career as a painter or teacher. These treasures demonstrate the imagination, knowledge, skill and ingenuity of the designers, and the makers who translate their two-dimensional designs into three-dimensional forms. Yet only in close-up can the inventiveness and resourcefulness of designer and maker be really appreciated. Colours which seem garish in daylight soften under strong stage light. Costumes also have to be extremely well constructed to survive the strains of performance and many costumes bear the scars of a long life. Fashionable clothes may only be worn a few times, but in a successful stage production a costume is worn every night for months or years. The clothes must stand up to robust handling, quick changes, theatre grime and the sweat generated by nerves and the incredible heat of the stage light. S Once a play and its director have been chosen, a creative team is selected. This includes the designer and, according to the type of show, composer, choreographer and conductor. The physical look of a show is decided on by the director or choreographer for a dance work in consultation with the designer. The designer has to be able to visualise how each individual costume will fit into an overall stage picture, giving each its proper place, be it for a leading actor or a walk-on part. Each individual design must fit into the overall concept while taking into consideration the performer who will wear the costume and what movements they have to make, and also the budget and the scale of the theatres in which the production will play. The actual design is a working drawing for the maker. This can be an evocative sketch, the most detailed, annotated drawing or diagram, a collage or a computer graphic. If the designer knows exactly which fabrics and trimmings he or she wants used, swatches are attached to the drawings; other designers might discuss matters with the costume makers or if they are known and trusted, leave these decisions to them. Some designs are a representation of real clothes and the drawings are straightforward, without stylisation or special presentation. Other designers are more impressionistic, evoking rather than depicting the finished costume, often working closely with the makers. Leading costumiers Carl Bonn and Colin Mackenzie found the vaguest designs most satisfying to work on: What are you doing? Designers also have to consider the technical elements of their costumes. For example, designing for partially-clad showgirls poses special problems, including which parts of the body to highlight and how, and which to conceal, for how long and when. During the s and s, nudity became more acceptable both in public and performance topless waitresses and performers first appeared in the s, The Sun published Page 3 Girls in and the first topless model in Cobb focused the toplessness by surrounding the breasts with elaborate sleeves, high imaginative headdresses and witty g-strings, all relating to the particular theme. The elaborate, towering headdresses were precise constructions, perfectly balanced so long as the wearer moved and stood correctly. For the g-strings, Cobb eliminated the supporting bands round the hips. They must have been uncomfortable to wear and it is perhaps not surprising that, when a manufacturer introduced a c-string for day wear in , it was received with very modified rapture by the testers. S Showgirl costume design, Ronald Cobb, S Notes to the maker Some designers attach fabric samples to their designs while others keep the samples for an entire costume or production on separate sheets with a note of the cost and supplier. These samples are chosen by the designer, or selected in consultation with the makers. When no costume yet exists, they are useful in helping people to visualise finished costume and

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also indicate the different fabrics available to designers at different times. The drawings also sometimes include notes to the makers. S Fantasy In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, pantomime developed into extravagant spectacles, including scenes that were little more than parades of dozens of lavish and imaginative costumes based on a theme. Another branch of fantasy is designing animals or supernatural creatures. Attilio Comelli designed these insect costumes for girls to wear as part of the pantomime *Babes in the Wood* at Drury Lane, in the Christmas of 1891. There were twelve pairs of insects who featured in the forest scene. Other animals dancing in this pantomime in the forest scene included eight storks and twelve robins. Drury Lane prided itself on producing the most visually impressive productions in the country as it had done since the days when Augustus Harris had been producer. At this date Arthur Collins was in charge at Drury Lane, and he was the co-author of this pantomime. He trained as a painter, but his theatre work was avidly collected in London and Paris. Today his sensuous, erotic drawings command high prices. Many have tried, with varying success, to fake his work. He would not, of course, have expected the breasts to be exposed in the finished costume. His unusual approach made things interesting for the costume makers. His costume designs were in the form of paper dolls, creating headaches for costume makers Carl Bonn and Colin Mackenzie: Oh, it was sheer hell. Having abandoned this idea, his final designs reminded some critics of spacemen, while the helmets of Edmund and Edgar reminded another of the coal-scuttles worn by Tweedum and Tweedledee in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. Having their clothes seen on stage, worn by elegant actresses, was excellent free publicity in the days before the catwalk fashion shows. In the 1950s Balenciaga dressed Katharine Hepburn.