Process workbook

Scenic art and costume

Proof of AI statement

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Costume design for tv

High budget tv shows

- costume continuity checker
- textile artist
- Costume concept artist
- Cutter fitter
- Costume designer
- Personal costumers
- Specialty costume manufacturer
- Mold maker / casting technician
- Stitcher
- Tailor
- Key costumer
- Dyer / ager
- Fabric buyer
- Costume coordinator
- Breakdown artist

Low budget tv shows

- Multiroling
- Costume supervisor
- Wardrobe master
- Costume designer
- Stand-by costumer

Very similar to costuming for film, the divide for costuming in high budget tv shows vs low budget tv shows mainly comes down to if the show can afford specialist costume workers. However, for shows they will often keep store of all costumes for many years in anticipation of further seasons.

Costume department for film

High budget films

- Personal costumers
- Specialty costume manufacturer
- Mold maker / casting technician
- Cutter fitter
- Set costumer
- Costume concept artist
- Costume designer
- Stitcher
- Tailor
- Key costumer
- Dyer / ager
- Fabric buyer
- Costume coordinator
- Breakdown artist
- Costume designer

Lower budget films

- Multiroling
- Costume concept artist
- Costume designer
- Costume supervisor
- Stand-by costumer

The largest difference between the costume/wardrobe departments of high budget vs low budget films is that with larger budget films the people they hire are much more specialist; they will have an expert individual person for each specific need because they can afford to pay them. On lower budget films, the costume designers have to be multi-skilled. This means often the person designing the costume concepts is often the same person creating the costumes and making any alterations. Another difference is that low budget films will often use found-costumes and alter them as opposed to creating a brand new tailored costume for each character.

Costume design for theatre

- Costume concept artist
- Costume designer
- Costume maker
- Pattern cutter
- Associate costume designer
- Wardrobe assistants
- Deputy head of wigs
- Wigs assistant

Costumes for theatre are often hired from companies that store warehouses full of pre-made costumes. These type of costumes, made specifically for theatre shows are made for easy adjustments. However, the older costumes, for example West End shows, still require adjustments to be stitched by hand, as opposed to using sewing machines.
There are many jobs for costume / wardrobe specialist jobs within the world of theatre; there are always new shows coming out that require new costumes, or specific adaptations of pre-existing shows with new visions or adjustments that need to be made.

Hair & wigs for the stage

One role I saw pop up frequently when looking at roles for film and theatre, which is not something that I had really properly considered before but of course would be highly significant for performers. I found Rosemarie Swinfields book 'Hair & wigs for the stage' very helpful and interesting; she discusses how to work with your own hair, working with wigs and working with period hairstyles.

'Period styles; when a production is set in a past era with accurate costumes, you will need to think carefully about hairstyles of the period and men would need to check if the character would have worn facial hair of some description.' thinking about this, I considered how if you neglect this and you can easily look out of period, 'almost as if you are wearing the wrong head.'

' Indeed, for some plays and shows the correct hair and make-up is vital for the look of the piece, so when you find yourself cast in a period, a little research will be needed and this can be quite time consuming. You may find the look, but could you achieve it with your own hair or would a wig be more appropriate? If you are male, which moustache or beard would be more appropriate?''

(Rosemarie Swinfield 1999)

Additionally, consideration of political influences/the characters social standing is important when recreating period-accurate hair - their class, morals and the nations political climate of that time would all be affecting influences that might change how they hold their hair.

Benefits of using wigs - can be reused over and over again, you don't need to worry about damaging the actors hair permanently

Drawbacks of wigs - can get heavy, fitting a wig over long hair can be difficult, good quality wigs can get very expensive

Benefits of using real hair - more natural - looking, smoother transition with nop change of it falling off

Drawbacks of using real hair - has to be taken out after every show - time consuming, limitations such as length, colour and texture

Other things to consider - mens hair and womens hair have different textures, every different are will have different popular hairstyles, hair colour affects character appearance and should be coordinated to the costume and makeup







Costume design for other events

Every event/show with an audience should have a costume coordinator. Often for lower budget productions, this person might also be the director, designer and choreographer. While in contrast, large budget events will have a different person in charge of every little aspect of the wardrobe, for example, a taylor, wig styler, costume manufacturer, ect.

The type of shows that might require costume specialists can range from concerts, red carpet events, special events, ect. And depends on the budget as to how many specialists they can hire to make them look as good as possible.





The roles of a scenic designer

In simple terms, a scenic designer is ‘a professional artist responsible for the visual environment in which a theatrical production takes place.’ (illuminating Engineering society,2020). However its more than just conceptualising sets, a scenic designer is responsible for selecting and integrating various design elements such as colour schemes, textures, architectural features, and props. They are in charge of the create decorative elements that brings the set together, considering practical aspects such as light, space limitations, technical feasibility and the shows complete environment.
Their work begins with an in-depth script analysis followed by research, brainstorming and conceptualising an environment that effectively reflects the designs, emotions and themes of the production. This can be done in a mix of hand drawn sketches, 3D models, digital models and physical marquettes. The effectively plan every meticulous design of the set from large scale structures to intricate details, overseeing the construction process, working with carpenters, painters, and other craftspeople to bring their vision to life. However, their job is not just limited to aesthetics; scenic designers must consider practical aspects such as actor movement, scene transitions, and the limitations of the performance space. Their designs not only provide a backdrop for the action but also contribute into the storytelling; building the performance environment around the centre story; adding depth and helping to centre the story in the audiences perspectives. Essentially a scenic designers expertise lies in crafting immersive, coherent worlds that serve the productions artistic and narrative goals

(illuminating Engineering society,2020).

Christopher Rhoton

Christopher Rhoton is a scenic artist and costume designer who has worked on a wide range of shows such as Kinky Boots, Beau and Much Ado About nothing. I found his work when studying the role of a scenic artist and found his work absolutely stunning and extremely detailed. I especially like the set he designed for Million Dollar Quartet (centre right) and the black box scale model (centre left). I love the variety of the sets that he creates and the almost dystopian, dark, gloomy feel that he creates within many of his sets which I think gives them strong character and an incredible impression on stage. He has a visibly valuable understanding of lighting and colour theory in how he decorates and textures his sets in a way the perfectly captures the light. He works with a range of perceptions and concepts to accentuate the moments of importance within the set; valuing the detail and realism in those moments in which the audience will recognise and prioritising the illusion of material in the important segments of the sets. A key example of this is in the set of The Beauty Queen of Leenane (bottom right) where the light shines through stunningly decorated withered glass windows and the texture created for the brickwork on the back wall is illuminated subtly, while the decrepit small room centre stage is framed to effectively to display the decay and how the characters blend seamlessly into the space.









SCENIC DESIGN ASSOCIATE DESIGN COSTUME DESIGN RESUME CONTAC



Let's Talk!

Christopher Rhoton
designer.rhoton@gmail.com

E-mail me directly or use the contact form below.

Name * Gilly Branson

Email * gilly.branson1@gmail.com

Subject scenic and costume design

Message Good evening,
I'm a first year student at the University of Wales Trinity St David and I'm studying scenic art and costume, I came across your work and I'm greatly inspired by your previous projects, I think your designs are truly amazing and wanted to ask about your inspirations and process?
what inspires your creative visions and how do you decide what you're going to create?

Hi,

Sorry for the delay. Thanks for your kind e-mail. I really appreciate it!

It's difficult to compress any intelligent answer into a quick e-mail. I am always absorbing everything around me like a sponge. When I'm working on a specific project, I look for inspiration everywhere I go - even the grocery store! You never know what might spark an idea. I also compile a lot of image research when I'm designing a show - whenever I feel stuck on something, I go back to my research. What kind of door knobs should I have? Back to the research.

I hope that helps a bit!

contact

I contacted Rhoton, not expecting anything back, I asked him about his inspirations and processes, to which I received a reply a few weeks later. He explained how he absorbs everything around him, finding inspiration in the smallest of tasks, as simple as going shopping. Additionally, he discusses how he compiles research when designing a show, using it as inspiration whenever he feels stuck to strike up a new idea. I found these concepts quite inspirational and fascinating in their nature and I often find myself following in these footsteps; my mind subconsciously searching for inspiration even in the most mundane of tasks.
However, I find most of my own inspiration is seeded from the natural world around me as I am heavily influenced by my many explorations through field, boggs and woodland; finding my most ethereal moments in the peace of the natural world.

Materials for costume design

The development of textiles-spinning, weaving, and sewing was one of mankind's earliest technical stone tools. And after 20-thousand-plus years of textile history, the basic process for producing textiles have not changed. Fibres still need to be harvested and spun into thread or yarn. Those yarns have to be manipulated on some type of loom structure to create fabric.

Textile performance concepts and properties

Performance concepts relate to the measure of textiles ability to perform in the final product. These concepts include durability, comfort, care, appearance, and safety

Properties of durability

Durability is the measure of a textile products ability to resist stress and serve its intended use. (each criterion can be measured in a textile lab)

Properties of comfort

Properties of comfort measure a textiles ability to serve the purpose of human comfort. This includes issues of static and temperature. Comfort does not relate to hand, or the way a fabric feels

Properties of care

Care is the treatment that is required to maintain the original look of a textile product; it relates to wear, cleaning and storage

Properties of appearance

Appearance is the measure of a fabrics ability to retain aesthetically acceptable and servable

Properties of safety

The safety of a fabric for specific and-product uses its determined by how a fiber burns. In addition, the burn properties aid in the identification of the fiber.

(Deborah E. Young 2013)

Textile performance concepts and properties

- Abrasion resistance: the ability of a fabric to withstand rubbing without wearing a hole in the surface. This property is relevant for outerwear, uniforms and pants.
- pilling: the formation of tangled fibres on the surface of the fabric. Pilling is also caused by rubbing, but with a different end result.
- Cohesiveness: the ability of fibres to cling together. Only relevant for yarn spinning. Usually proved by crimp.
- Flexibility: the ability of fibres to matte together to form a fabric
- Elongation: the degree to which a fibre may be stretched without breaking; the amount of give in a fabric. Growth can be a problem in textiles that simply elongate and so nt recover from stretching
- Elasticity: the ability of fibre to stretch and recover to its original size and shape after stretching. An elastic fibre prevents bagginess in elbows and knees
- Elastomericity: the ability of a fiber to stretch 100 percent and recover
- Dimensional stability: the ability of a fiber to retain a given size and shape through use and care. Relates to shrinkage
- Tenacity (strength): the ability of a fiber, yarn, or fabric to resist stress
- Tensile strength: the ability of a fabric to withstand a pulling force. Relates ro breaking point
- Tearing strength: the ability of a fabric to resistor tearing or ripping
- Snag resistance: the ability of a fabric to resist yarns being pulled out
- Yarn distortion: the ability of a fabric to avoid yearn or seam slippage
- Flexibility: the ability of a fabric to bend repeatedly without breaking. The more flexible the fibre the more drapable the fabric will be.

(Deborah E. Young 2013)

(Jonella, 2019)

Materials for costume design

Neoprene

The sponge-like qualities of Neoprene make this the best fabric for creating cosplay armour and weaponry. Customise with an image of real armour or metal texture in order to accurately execute the illusion. It's 3-4mm thick, weighs 1000gsm and is totally opaque, making it an ideal fabric for outdoor style garments. Soft and stretchy in nature, cosplay Neoprene is a firm favourite amongst our cosplay customers.

Features:

- thick
- spongy
- thick
- spongy
- opaque
- soft
- stretchy
- durable



Scuba

Stretchy Scuba is perfect for making body suits like those worn by superheroes as it's form-fitting and figure hugging. The face has a subtle sheen, giving your Scuba fabric a high-tech, futuristic look, which is ideal for cosplay costume making. I think another reason to love this thick, lively textile is that it's soft and cool to touch, allowing you to wear it all day and remain comfortable. Recreate your favourite superhero's suit by customising Scuba with the exact same design. It's an easy way to get your desired cosplay look.

Features:

- Heavyweight
- Stretchy
- Thick
- Soft
- Lively
- Figure hugging



Slinky matt Lycra

Slinky matt Lycra is as the name suggests, slinky! Smooth and slippy, it glides effortlessly over your skin and can be worn very tight to your body. Despite being thinner than Scuba, Slinky matt Lycra offers a lot of support and has a firm hold, as well as being highly elasticated. Again, this is well suited to making your own superhero cosplay bodysuit, or if the character you're emanating derives from the oceans, the water repellent qualities of Slinky matt Lycra come in useful.

Features:

- Smooth
- Form-fitting
- Soft
- Breathable
- Comfortable
- Slinky



(Jonella, 2019)

Material for costume design

Crushed velour

Crushed velour immediately adds drama to any outfit and demands attention. The soft, short pile is extremely shimmery, resulting in an almost metallic aesthetic. Combined with the shiny silver undertones, this material has all the makings for a futuristic themed cosplay outfit. If your design/print needs movement, Crushed Velour has a distinctive ripple effect on the plush face that is reminiscent of sunlight beaming down on the surface of the ocean. Capes, headpieces, gloves and other accessories made using this super stretchy Crushed Velour will make your costume a showstopper.

Features:

- Shiny face
- Soft
- Opaque
- Stretchy
- Shimmery
- Luxurious



Organza

You might typically associate Organza with bridal wear, but it has a firm place in the cosplay world too. It's particularly useful for skirt overlays, and is an essential component when making a Disney princess dress and other feminine designs. The transparent quality, sheer finish and subtle sparkle evoke imagery of an ethereal land. Despite this feminine quality, you can use it to replicate more masculine elements such as fire. Manipulate it to resemble flames licking your body, for example, or incorporate into a headpiece for a statement feature.

Features:

- Transparent
- Sheer
- Subtle sparkle
- Light
- Net-like
- Floaty drape



G-mesh

Line your cosplay costume with G-Mesh, a stretchy open knit fabric that allows your body to breathe. Featuring diamond shaped holes, your mesh has a distinctive look and feel and helps to keep you cool. As well as lining garments, you can get creative and make a realistic military camouflage helmet using G-Mesh. Feed leaves and branches through the holes and then attach to the helmet for a cool accessory.

Features:

- Open knit
- Breathable
- Light
- Airy
- Stretchy
- Fluid drape



Materials for costume design

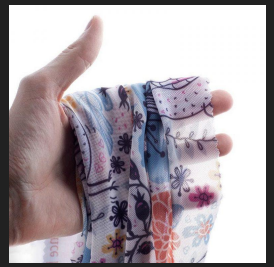
(Jonella, 2019)

Florence Net

Florence Net is a super fine mesh fabric that has a fluid drape. Weighing just 60gsm, it's incredibly light but don't be fooled as it's a lot tougher than it looks. It has a 4-way stretch and can be used for all sorts of cosplay costume features; lingerie, lightweight leggings, delicate gloves, sheer sleeves, headbands...there's so many opportunities!

Features:

- Sheer
- Transparent
- Gentle
- Soft
- Stretchy
- Fluid drape



Marbled Velvet

For a real statement piece, you'll love this luxurious velvet fabric. Marbled Velvet has a magical pile that goes in all directions, creating the distinguished marbling and rippling effect. The fabric 'dances' in the light and appears to change textures. I think it's the ultimate fabric to use for making a majestic coat, cape or shawl that will undoubtedly receive widespread admiration. Printed with your unique designs, you can embody the prowess of your favourite mythical character and bask in the glory that Marbled Velvet helps to cultivate.

Features:

- Marbled effect
- Shiny
- Strong
- Soft
- Durable
- Short pile



Lycra soft sheen

This medium weight Lycra Soft Sheen is springy, stretchy and more importantly, shimmery faced! The face of the fabric isso smooth and the back feels cool and smooth against your skin. It moulds well to the figure, enhancing your features and creating a gorgeous silhouette. This makes it the best fabric for a superhero body suit. Lycra Soft Sheen has moisture wicking and sweat resistant properties, cosplay essentials, especially when you have more layers and other outer garments as part of your costume.

Features:

- Sparkly face
- Stretchy
- Springy
- Moisture wicking
- Soft
- Form-fitting



Scenic paintshop

Scenic paint shops health and safety regulations

Scenic shops come under regulations of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Most scenic shop rules can be found in the OSHA General Industry Standards, in certain instances, however, scenic work is regulated under the construction industry standards. OSHA's definition of construction work is broad and includes any "alterations or repair, including painting and decorating". Any large construction work in shops or on stage is regulated by both standards. A copy of both sets of rules should be kept in the shop. Call your local department of labour and find out whether you come under a federal or state OSHA agency and ask how to order a copy of the appropriate regulations. OSHA requires a formal approach to health and safety. Examples of laws found in OSHAs part of the Code of Federal Regulations that apply directly to scenic work include the following:

- Hazard communication (1926.59, 1910.1200
- Respiratory protection (1926.103, 1910.134
- Personal protective equipment (1926.28 1926.150)
- Fire extinguisher use and training (1910.157, 1926.150)
- Ladders (1910.25-26, 1926.1053)
- Fall protection (1926.500-503)
- Scaffold regulations (1910.28 amd 1926.451)
- Occupational noise exposure (1910.95 or 1926.152)
- Flammable and combustible liquids (1910.106 or 1926.152)
- Electrical safety (1926.401-405, 1910.301-304)
- Medical services and first aid (1910.151,1926.50)
- Bloodborne pathogens standard (1910.1030)
- Sanitation (1910.141,1926.51)

Respiratory protection

Employers of workers wearing masks and respirators are required by OSHA to develop a respiratory protection program. Air-supplied respiratory protection is needed for products that emit toxic substances for which there is no air purifying cartridges.

Protective equipment

The use of goggles and safety glasses, face shields, hearing protection, gloves, protective clothing, steel toed shoes, hard hats and all protective equipment are regulated by OSHA. the rules also require documented training workers.

Fall protection

All situations in which workers could fall a significant distance to the floor are regulated by OSHA. This includes the use of ladders. One ladder rule frequently broken is standing or sitting on the top section or the top step.

Studio building hazards

Most scenic studios and shops are located in old warehouses, piers, basements, factories and other low-rent facilities. Therefore, employers need to be certain that these locations provide minimum requirements for personal safety

Fire safety

If there is an overhead sprinkler system, employers must determine whether it is in working order and whether it is dry or wet pipe system. Dry pipe systems allow a short time to turn the system off if a head ius accidentally damaged during construction, thus avoiding water damage.

Emergency exits and escape routes

OSHA rules require employers to hold a formal meeting to explain workspace hazards and emergency procedures whenever new employees arrive on site. If employers do not follow these laws, employees need to protect themselves

(Susan Crabtree & Peter Beudert(2005)

Scenic paintshop

Changes in elevation

Any elevated platform, storage area, shaft, or hole where people could fall more than six feet must be guarded. Standard railings and overs over holes must be installed.

Electrical safety

Outlets should be available in many areas in the painting area. If the paint shop has a large expanse of floor space, overhead reels with multiple outlets should be installed at regular intervals through the centre of the shop. OSHA now requires outlets used for power tools on construction sites and outlets within 10 feet of a source of water to be ground-fault-cercuitinerupted.

Ventilation

The buildings ventilation will be the deciding factor in choice of materials. If there is no spray booth, spraying should not occur except when everyone is wearing respiratory protection.

Bathroom facilities

Clean bathrooms facilities must be present in sufficient numbers to accommodate the size of the workforce. If not, portable toilets must be rented until bathrooms can be installed. A water supply for washing hands and cleaning upo must be available.

Drinking water

In older cities and buildings, service pipes and plumbing pipes often are made of lead. Lead also may be found in solder used on potable water pipes, faucet, and floor model water coolers.

Lead paint

Buildings built before 1978 should be assumed to contain lead paint unless actual testing shows otherwise. Even well-maintained older buildings may contain painted-over or encapsulated lead paint that can be made airborne if renovation of any painted surface is planned.

Asbestos

Employers must watch for sources of old asbestos in the shop. Common sources of asbestos in the shop

Garbage and toxic chemicals

Only professional waste handlers can safely remove refuse that contains animal and human waste. Only toxic waste disposal contractors can legally remove old chemical products and containers, unidentified or unlabeled substances, asbestos and lead paint waste, and other chemicals

Conclusion

These are just a few of the many laws and regulations that apply to scenic work. But even if every rule is followed, accidents will not be reduced if scenic artists work without sleep, when they are faint with hunger, or when they are ill. The first and most important of all safety rules is for artist to take good care of themselves both on and off the job. It behooves all who are working with toxic materials to educate themselves about the hazards associated with their trade. Anyone in the teaching profession has a duty to teach both through lecture and good example the proper and safe handling of toxic materials.

(Susan Crabtree & Peter Beudert(2005)

texture

Texturing is one of the most important parts of scene art as it gives the set depth and realism, as well as protection, especially on materials that can easily break apart such as polystyrene. One of the most common types of texture for scenic art is jesmonite, which I used earlier in the year to assist with the second years project. Jesmonite is a powder which is mixed with water to create a paste that is painted on to a surface, reinforced with thin sheets of weaved fibreglass which is sandwiched underneath.

We also added jesmonite pigment of brown which makes the colour more manageable when it is eventually painted. Jesmonite harneds in a very short amount of time and becomes extremely tough and brittle, meaning it protects the polystine underneath.











Priming surfaces and scenic art materials

Canvases - all canvases require priming, unless specifically requested not too for an alternative effect

Floor cloth - traditionally these are painted with dyes in order that they remain as flexible as possible

Calicos and sheeting - these can either be priomed or not, demanding on the particular requirements of the designer or scenic artist

PVC - the only possible preparation needed on these materials is that they are kept as clean and grease-free as possible

Polyvinyl metallics - if any kind of painting is needed here, the method given for PVC is recommended

Contra - this textural material is usually stuck into another surface such as canvas.

Metals - all metals must be cleaned first with a metal degreaser

Wood and wood-based products - due to the highly absorbent nature of wood, it is necessary to treat all surfaces with a sealer to block out any natural stains and resins

Plaster and textural surfaces - if you are intending to put texture on any wooden surface, you must make sure that this has been properly sealed; if this is not done properly the texture is liable to fall off. Then, depending on the type of effort required, you may or may not prime. No prime will mean that the surfaces are far more absorbent, but when a prime is required, any acrylic scenic primer will do, or a thinned out scenic emulsion glaze or PVA.

Vac forms and precast moulds - prior to any painting, a coating is normally required and the method given for PVC is recommended

Polystyrene - due to the potential fire risk of these materials, they must at all times be protected with an appropriate fire-retardant coating.

foams/sponges - the description for polystyrene applies to these materials, except for muslin scrimming

Vinyl floorings - if any kind of painting is needed here, the method given for PVC is recommended

perspex/polycarbonate - a material often used for scenic suproses. Make sure that the surface is as dust free as possible before painting

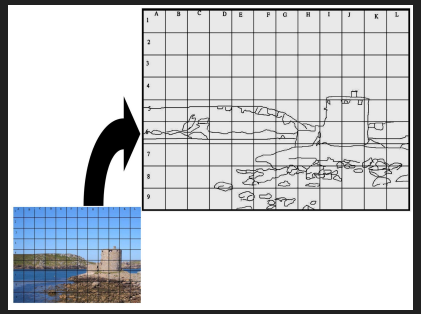
Fibreglass - a task often given to scenic artists is that of painting props. You will therefore need to know how to prep the surfaces prior to any painting

Jesmonite - this is a relatively new and revolutionary material now available on the market and is a water-based fibreglass system

Plaster and textural surfaces - if you are intending to put texture on any wooden surface, you must make sure that this has been properly sealed; if this is not done properly the texture is liable to fall off. Then, depending on the type of effort required, you may or may not prime. No prime will mean that the surfaces are far more absorbent, but when a prime is required, any acrylic scenic primer will do, or a thinned out scenic emulsion glaze or PVA.

Emma Troubridge and Tim Blaikie (2002)

Designing 2D and 3D



Gridding up

This refers to a method of design where a grid is transferred onto a design, allowing the design to be conveyed to a large scale through enlargement of the grid and the subsequent design underneath when drawn.



Projection

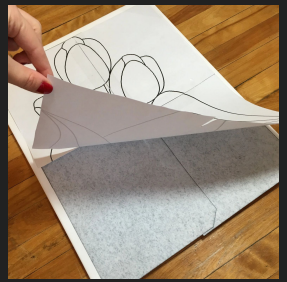
This was a technique we used in props and production roles module and refers to using an overhead projector to present a design drawn on a clear page of acetone using light onto a surface so that it can then be traced and transferred.



Stenciling

'A technique for reproducing designs by passing ink or paint over holes cut in cardboard or metal onto the surface to be decorated'

Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.)



Transfer paper

This is a specific type of paper with ink or carbon on the back so anything you draw will transfer over. This is commonly used in t shirts to transfer designs onto fabric

Distressing garments

‘Distressing a costume is a means of artificially enhancing the natural wear process’

Distressing garments is one of the most important parts of costume making to make a garment look lived-in; natural-worn clothes will dirty in the cuffs, neckline and seams, and wears out faster in the elbows and knees.

It's important to consider the characters regular routines; Sun bleaching along the tops of the shoulders and sleeves; maybe sand or dust stuck to the fabric. There may be dirt stains on the knees, elbows, butt and shoulders. Maybe there’s a bullet hole in the coat, or a tear in a sleeve where a bullet came too close. If working with machinery there will be oil stains, grease smears, and possibly spots of rust

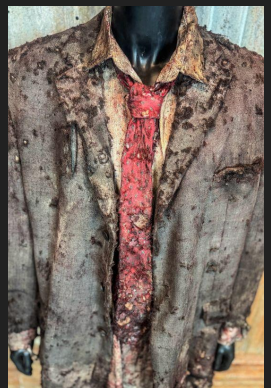
‘To make a costume look realistic, you don’t have to go crazy making your costume dirty – you just have to make it look *used*.’

- **Don’t make your fabric unwashable**. Ideally, your costume should look dirty, but smell clean.
- **Don’t destroy the costume’s structural integrity**. Shredding and sanding fabric can create realistic damage effects, but it will also shorten the lifespan of the material.
- **Organic materials break down over time**. For permanent weathering, use inorganic materials like plaster, gravel dust, or fuller’s earth rather than organic materials like flour or corn starch, which can grow mold or attract insects in storage.

Techniques for weathering/distressing fabric

-cutting the fabric/hacking at the fabric with scissors
-controlled ripping
-use friction to fray and wrinkle
-tea staining (with salt to help tea stain into the fabric)
-soldering iron to burn holes and scorch marks into fabric
-bloodstains (acrylic red with browns and blacks), dab onto fabric and use fingers to rub it in
-sand paper where there would be wear and tear
-extractor knife to make small nicks and tears
-more paint or inks to crete stains
-grinding dirt into the fabric
-pavement or cement to damage the fabric







(Ibrahim Mahama 1987)





Examples of distressing in film/tv

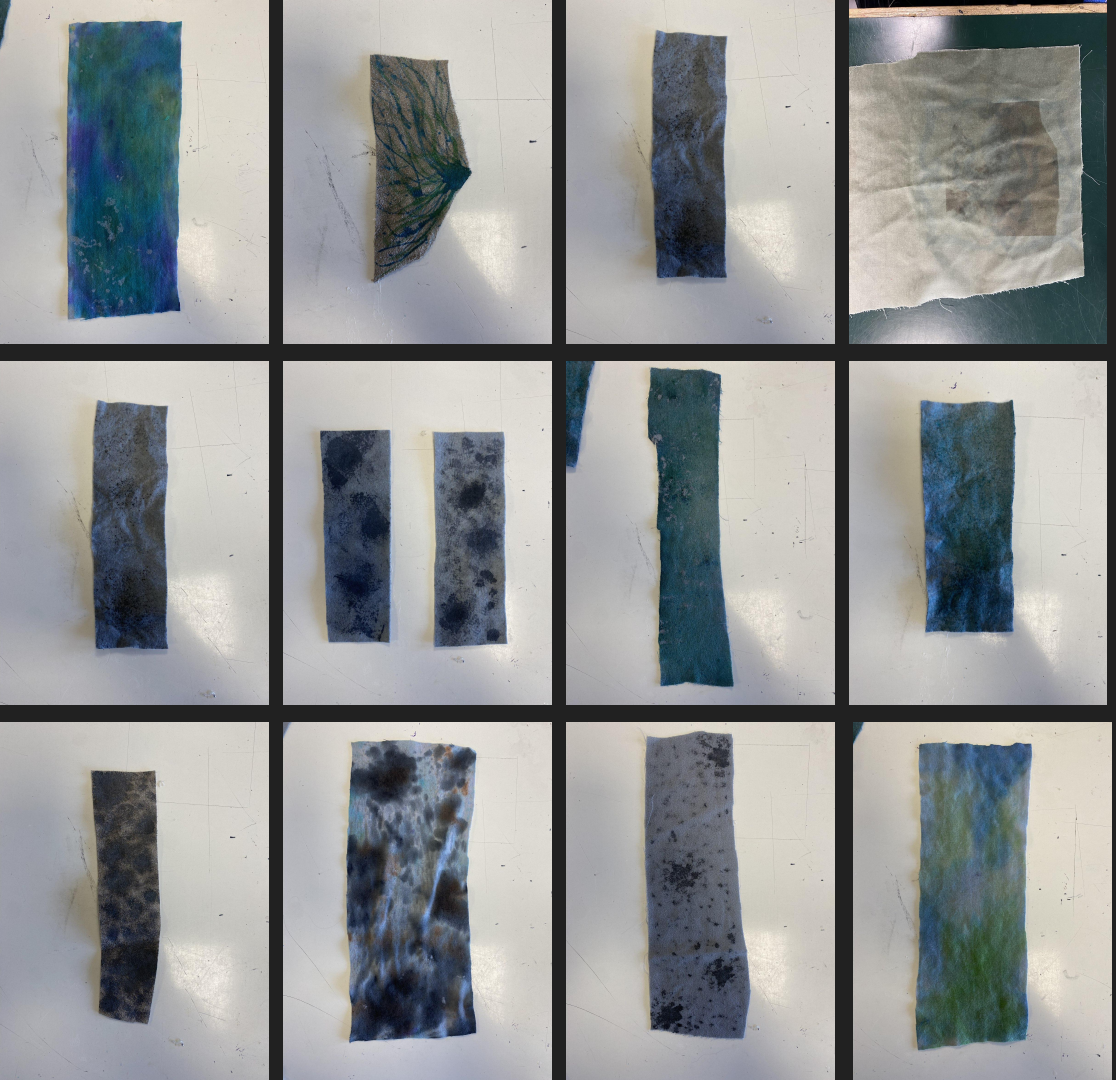
I looked at specifically post apocalyptic costume designs where the characters are in constant weathering, clothing and ability to wash come at a premium, therefore the costumes for these characters are worn down, distressed and stained from a life of fighting and traveling. The bottom right image is from Z nation; a zombie apocalypse tv show. The characters scavenge for clothing in the remnants of old shops and from the bodies of zombies. Their outfits are now obtained for function, not for fashion (although because it is a tv show it is also to make them look stylish for audience approval) but it is evident how their clothes have been torn, cut, dirtied and stained with tools, mud and probably some sort of paint.

The photos on the right are from fallout; another post-apocalypse show, however, this apocalypse is human composed (nuclear warfare). The images are a before and after of a vault dweller - someone who has spend their whole life in a nuclear fallout shelter - when she has just left the vault to when she has spent a few months out on the surface. She wears the same uniform throughout the series and therefore each event she goes through is aculimatied in her costume. A good example of this is the bloodstain on her chest obtained from a fight, which remains on her undershirt permanently. Her suit becomes worn, dirtied and stained with reds, browns and earthy colours, as well as pale bleaching from days out in the sun.

(fallout 2024)



(Z Nation 2014)



Water activated dye

These samples were created by my friend who is currently studying fashion and costume design in Wiltshire college. She explained to me the process of using aquadesign water activated dye to create different effects on strips of fabric. Water activated dye comes in powder form, and the proportion of water to dye will affect the strength of the colour that is created - the higher the concentration of powder, the stronger the colour will be.

There are different ways to apply the dye, the most popular being sprinkling the powder onto wet fabric, which then absorbs the colour and creates beautiful splotches and patterns across the fabric.

'Water-based ink pigments are finely ground, insoluble colorants suspended in a water-based medium. Unlike dyes, which dissolve in the solvent, pigments remain as discrete particles, providing superior lightfastness and durability.' (Finelandchem.com, 2024)

Costume design interview with Naiya Pearson

Naiya is a costume design student studying in Wiltshire college and focuses primarily on historical and fantasy garments. She's been a close friend for a number of years and allowed me to interview her on her current projects and interests within the costume industry

How would you go about creating designs for historical garments?
I research the time period quite extensively and do styles of specific silhouettes and the creation of the garments like what petticoats where used, what time of corsets did they have.

Where do you find your inspirations?
I personally I look at historical and at the moment I'm looking at fairy tales really, myths and legends

What about myths and legends interest you?
Because they're interesting and it is a form of verb history of stories that are told

And how do you link this to your costume design?
Probably in the most blatant way possible I make costumes of the myths.

What the hardest garment you've ever had to design?
I would say the dorothy house collaboration we had to do at the beginning of the year using found garments where we had to make it as large and sculptural as possible

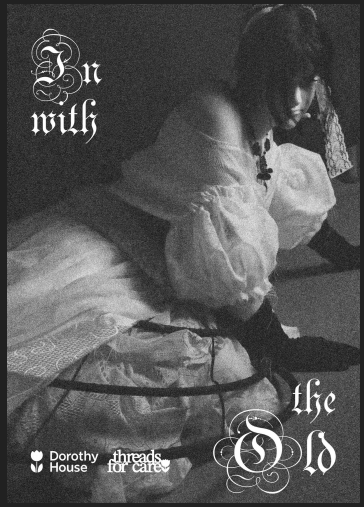
And how do this help ou to expand your abilities?
I'm much more comfortable draping fabric on a stand and making the fabric go how it wants to go

What steps do you take towards systanabily?
I use a lot of found garments, and use as much of the fabc as possible, I don't waste anything

What fabrics do you gravitate toward?
Natural fibres, I will always prefer natural fibers over synthetic they work so much better and they're so much nicer to wear

Is there anything else that you think I should know going into this field?
There are a lot of differences between film and tv and costuming; for theatre you have to pay a lot more attention for the camera because they will see everything. While for theatre you only have to put in as much detail as the closest people will see, you just have to hobble it together and throw ti on stage. Chuck a couple safety ins in it it'll be fine, haha.







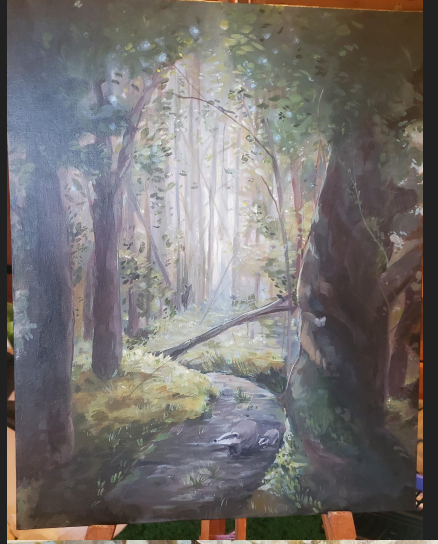




Fine art painting experience

I have a lot experience with acrylic paintings as painting is one of my favourite hobbies. What I found interesting was the contrast between fine art and scenic art. For example fine art - for the most part - is on a much smaller scale than scenic art, an focuses on the illusion of detail to come together to form an environment for performers to act within.

The painting on the left is the largest painting I've ever completed and it took me over 12 hours, whereas scenic art is huge and is quite often done in a rush with limited time restraints.










Fine art painting process

My process is similar to scenic art; I start with a base coat of an underlying tone of the piece (for example for a cold painting I'll use cool tones while for warmer paintings I'll start with a warm base.) then I will hadd basic shapes and from there I'll keep going in with further detailing.
Another key difference between fine art and scenic art is the tools; for my painting I have a limited spread of paintbrushes; and I have a handful of favorite brushes that I use for everything. In contrast, for scenic art there are dozens of brushes with many different purposes and most sets require a mix of many.







Natural vs synthetic brushes

Paint Brushes come in many different shapes, sizes and materials, with the key difference being the materials of the bristles. There are to main options - natural and unnatural. The unnatural bristles are made of a synthetic Taklon or nylon to simulate the main attribute of natural bristles; the split ends but have a less smooth application and are scratchier to apply. Natural bristles are made out of hog, horse, squirrel or badger hair and have a softer, more controlled finish, however, they are much more expensive - often costing upwards of £50 more than synthetic brushes. Additionally, on synthetic brushes, the ferrule is usually made out of lower quality metals such as copper or aluminium which is tacked or comped which often means that that hairs fall out. In contrast, for natural brushes, they come with extra attributes such as detachable handles for longer/shorter handles and handle extenders





Tool experimentation

Our task was to find out for ourselves the benefits, drawbacks and correct applications for each scenic art brush. We used natural and synthetic brushes to see how each brush differs.
We were given a canvas board and bright blue and pink imotion water based paint, commonly used for household decoration as opposed to proper scenic art paints because it's cheap and easy to use for an exercise

The brush above is a natural haired stippling brush, these brushes are larger, square shaped brushes that have a short and wide ferrule, they are trimmed to the same length so all of them can hot the surface at the same time. Stippling brushes are not intended for brushing paint but rather for dabbing pint on a surface or texturing it once it has been applied. This action can soften colour by evenly distributing wet paint.



Scenic art brushes

Natural blending brushes are long flat bruises used to blend colours together to create a smooth blended finish. They have long wooden handles to create a long reach. Natural blending brushes are essential in scenic art for creating seamless transitions in skies, soft cloud effects, atmospheric mist, and smooth gradients in landscape painting



Foliage brushes have longer bristles which carry more paint, they also have a different shaped ferrule from which the bristles taper out, producing a wider line. They are used for numerous texture techniques, foliage, landscape painting and for achieving larger lines/brush strokes. a fine mix of coarse yet soft badger hair for stippling and texture work. Foliage brushes are a favourite for foliage and tree in watercolours, but also work well in Oils and Acrylics.



Detailing brushes are very small and thin, and can have many different head shapes such as angle, flat or rounded and are the most familiar brushes that I use in scenic art because they are essentially the same as the brushes I use for fine art. They Are most often synthetic brushes and are primarily used for adding detailing such as lettering, visual interest and finer accents within a set. These brushes often have long handles for extra reach.





Scenic art brushes

Stencil bruises are small, round ferruled brushes with a sirt handle, they're designed to apply small amounts of paint by a dabbing action, they are used for slipping through stencils and are available in a variety of sizes up to 36 cm. Stencil brushes are designed for precision, featuring short, stiff, and densely packed bristles (natural or synthetic) that prevent paint from seeping under stencils.ges

Graining tools come in two types; combs and heart grainers
Combs are made from rubber, metal or wood. Combs have fine steel or rubber teeth for graining effects in various widths. A selection of combs in steel and rubber to create graining effects. Different sizes create fine, medium or coarse wood graining. These are to be covered with a thin cloth and pull down over your work. Rubber triangular combs with a fine side, medium side and coarse sides are also used to again create wood graining effects.





Heart grainers are used for graining pine and oak effects, a rubber rocker heart grainer is dragged and rocked to create a knots and grain in wood

Scenic art brushes

Pointed sash brushes have round wooden handles with a copper/aluminium round or oval ferrule. The bristles are trimmed at an angle all round, unlike a scenic fitch. They are used for figurative artwork and painting lines, either straight or curved and are available in a variety of sizes up to 36mm diameter

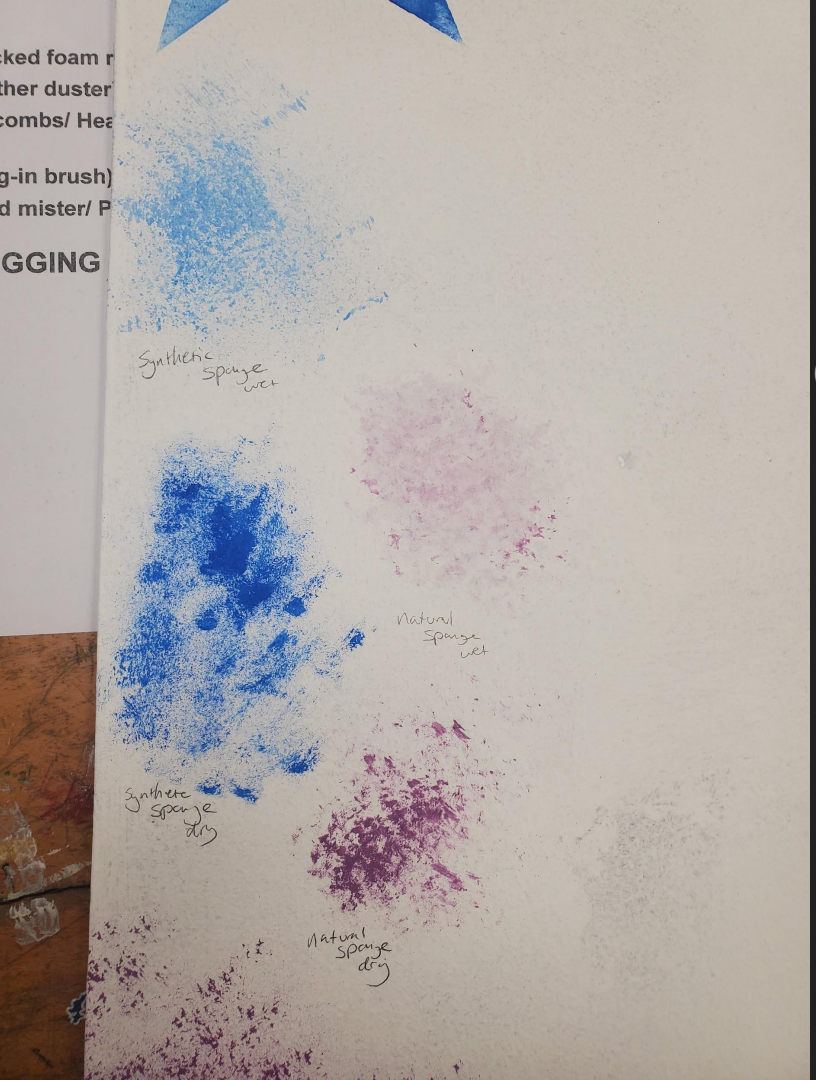




Lay in and priming brushes are all types of flat-ferrule brushes, the term lay-in refers to filling in rudimentary areas of colour on scenery. These brushes are used for a variety of other tasks and techniques, such as base coating, wet blending, dry brushing, splattering and glazing

Wood Graining brushes have very long bristles with varnished wooden handles, they create grain fitting mahogany, walnut, rosewood, cedar, ect. Flogging brushes are very strange brushes used to gently dap the wood grain texture to create flicks and detail within the grain.





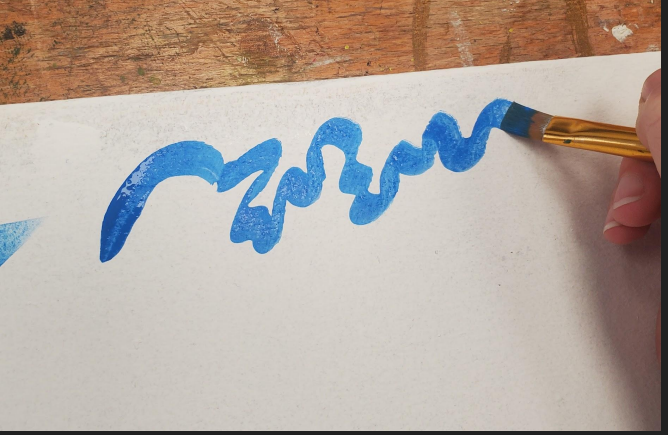
Sponges

There are three types of brushes that we were allowed to experiment with; natural, synthetic and a mix of both (photo on the left) which has a strange plasticy natural feel. I tried out all sponges dry and wet to see the different textures I could acquire



I found that wet sponges have a much more subtle, soft effect in comparison to the dry sponges that create quite a strong, textural impact. I really enjoyed using sponges but in particular I preferred the synthetic sponge because I felt that it blended much more easily. I can easily see how they might be used to create foliage, clouds or brickwork in scenic art.

Detailing brushes



Smaller brushes, to no one's surprise, are used for detaining work; writing fonts, creating foliage or adding little details to sets/scenery. These brushes come in many different shapes and sizes, often flat, slated of circular. sign -writers brushes made from long, slender and tapered animal hair



I really enjoyed using these brushes as the detailing work is the closest that I was used to with painting and I have used foliage brushes in the past so have experience with that area. I found that the signwriters brushes were more difficult to use without a steady hand and would be easy to mess up, however, they did carry a lot of paint as they are specifically designed to carry paint an distribute it equally.





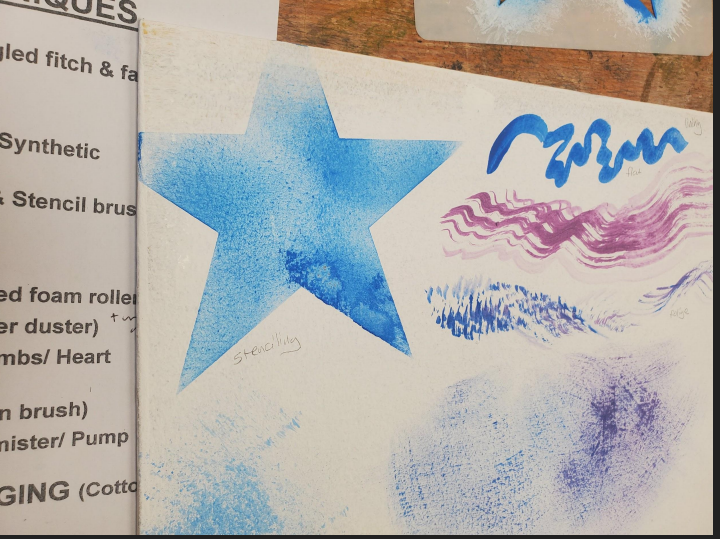


Blending brush

Using this wide synthetic brush you can blend two colours together, utilising water to mix the two colours. The wide brush means that the you can blend colours across a wide across more easily and therefore is well versed for scenic art

I enjoyed using this brush, however, I feel like using the synthetic brush means the finish is less smooth and has a messier finish than if I were to use a natural haired brush





Stenciling and rolling

Using a plastic base or reference, the stenciling method of scenic design allows you to create patterns, designs or letterings quickly and easily without having to paint then all out yourself. Using a stencil brush to dab the paint lightly into the stencil. When I started, my brush was too wet and created a strange effect on the canvas but after that I managed to master the distribution and create a more even spread.

I found rolling very enjoyable and it gives me lots of ideas for the future. For this, using a paint roller with patterns cut out of the foam, or glued onto the surface you can create patterns onto the canvas in that pattern. I had seen this before in the second years presentations where they had created a roller covered in numbers to create a random sequence of never-ending numbers in the style of an old fashioned number machine.

The roller I tried was strapped with string to create a strange pattern across the canvas but I can see how this would be very helpful to create a repeating pattern like brick or stonework.



PAINTING TECHNIQ

- LINING (Flat, round, angled f shaped foliage brush)
- BLENDING
- SPONGING (Natural & Synt sponges)
- STIPPLING (Stippling & Ste
- DRY BRUSHING
- CROSSHATCHING
- ROLLERING (Cut/ picked fi
- SHLEPITCHKA (Feather d
- GRAINING (Graining combs grainers)
- SPATTERING (Laying-in b
- SPRAYING (Hand-held mist sprayer)
- RAG-ROLLING/ RAGGI muslin fabric)











Rag rolling

Rag rolling is done with either muslin or 100% cotton with no tags or seams, soaked in water and dipped in paint. They're then rolled across a background to create a textured repeated pattern. They're folded in a specific way; with the sides folded in and the centre rolled together to create a specific form.





Rag rolling

As a class we rolled together, each of us using a slightly different technique which generated a slightly different pattern, I found this really interesting to see and overall found this method highly enjoyable and practical for creating texture and repetition within scenery. We used brightly coloured imotion paint so that we can get used to using the technique and clearly see the patterns made, but in practical scenery, the colours will be more subtle and practical.











Ragging on

Similar to rag rolling, the ragging on technique requires muslin or 100% cotton. However, this techniques propose is not to create patterns, but instead to create texture. The material is dampened in water and dipped in paint before being pressed onto the background. The key difference between this and rag rolling is that you have to think about how to move the materials in order to avoid patterns. I really enjoyed how much versatility the technique presents, and I found it very fun to create the different textures. I can really see how this method can effectively be used in scenic design.

Different methods

Every different way you move the rag will create a different technique, different texture and have a different purpose. One of these techniques that we experimented with was twisting the rag into a long tube-like shape and slapping it onto the paper. This creates a linear texture; lines and arcs that can be rotated to create a new effect.

One of the things that I really enjoyed about learning this technique is how every different way of moving the rag will create a different mark.





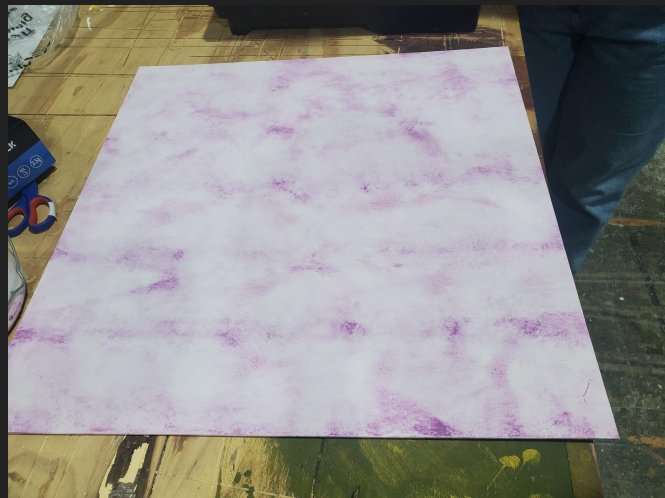
Ragging off

Ragging off tkes the techniques of ragging on, but in reverse. You start by mixing 1:1 paint and water with 10% glaze, and rolling the paint onto the canvas with a paint roller before using a scrunched rag to dab the paint off the canvas. This method requires moving quickly after the paint is applied because the glaze causes the paint to dry quickly; if you don’t get the effect down in time, the paint will dry and won't be rubbed off the canvas. This technique is very effective for creating clouds/skyscapes ect and I found it highly enjoyable and I think that the texture it created was very aesthetic and I can definitely see this working well in a scenic art world.



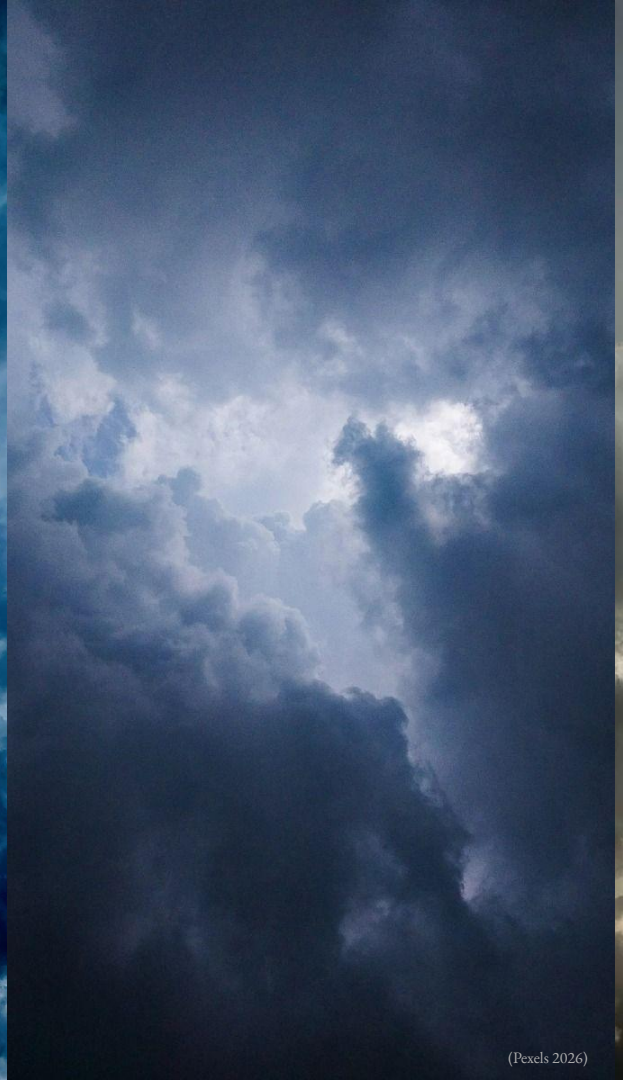




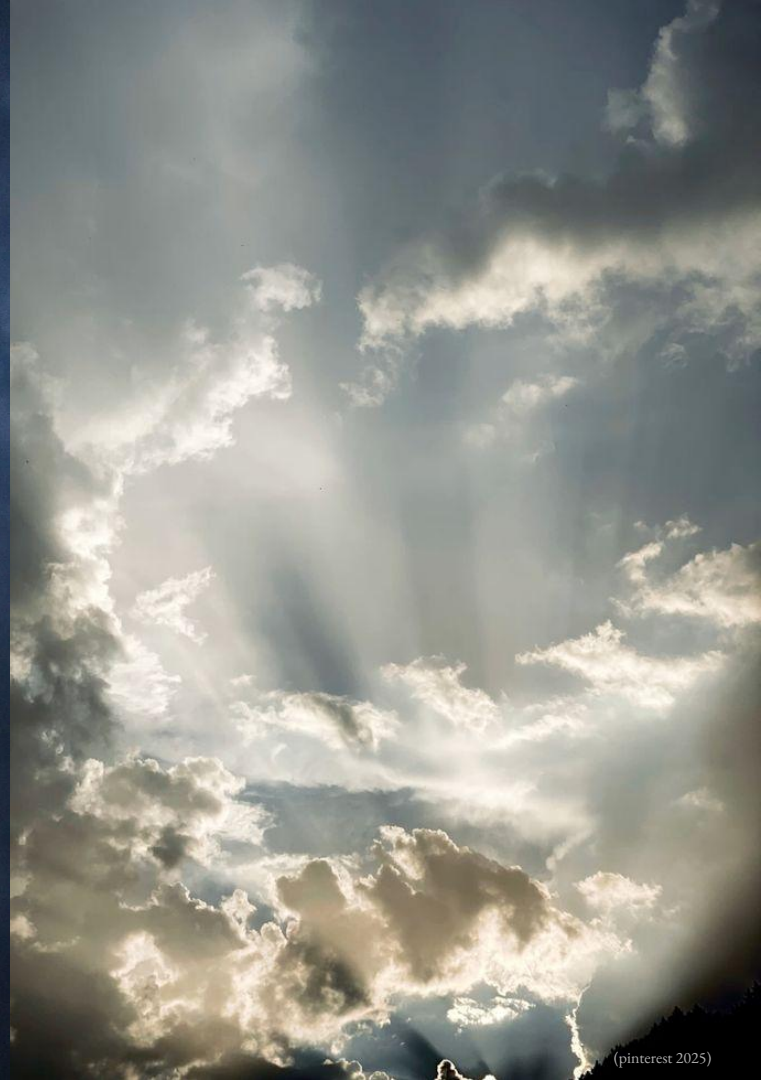




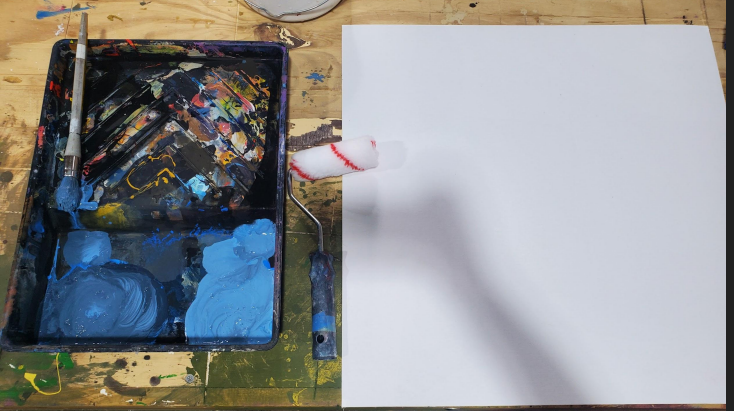
(presenter media 2026)



(Pexels 2026)



(pinterest 2025)





Creating a skyscape

From the techniques we learnt in class, out task was to create a skyscape using a mixture of emulsion paint, which is cheap and water based, and acrylic paint.

Painting is right up my street, and a hobby in which I am very well versed so i really enjoyed this. I especially enjoyed being able to put the new skills i had learnt into a practical project.

I first used the ragging off technique with a darker blue around the outer of the canvas and a lighter blue in the centre to create an initial light source. This already looked pretty good in my opinion, but after waiting for it to dry i was able to create more details through other tools/methods which is the key for any good painting.





Creating a skyscape

Once the base had dried I went in with the ragging on technique to add deeper colour and more variety; this time adding small amounts of purple and a darker blue to strengthen the source of light that I enhanced further with small amounts of white acrylic paint. I used the stippling brush to further blend this out and create a cloud-like texture.



Creating detailing

The most important part that will make or break any piece is the detailing. In this case the clouds and finalization of the light source. I began by using the flat lining brush to map put where the light would hit the clouds, creating that signature ‘silver lining’ I then used a synthetic sponge to blend the transition to make it more natural. I went in with some scenic art yellow paint, mixed with a little pink to create an orange/yellow to create a contrast with the blue and bring the viewers attention to the light source before softening out with a slanted lining brush. I also went in deeper with a darker blue to blend out the corners and highlight the light.







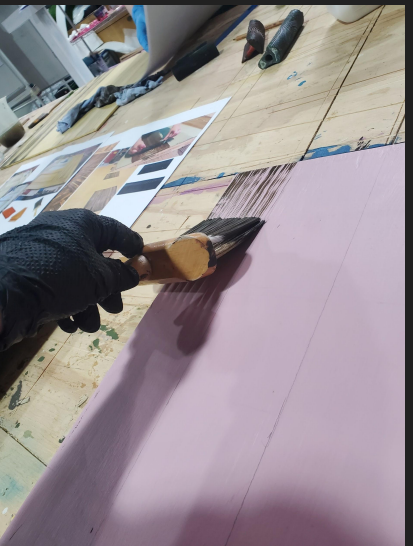






Wood graining

In order to effectively expand our texture and colour theory knowledge we studied how to create different wood graining textures. We created two paintings with two different base colours; one with a more pink prime base in order to build a more mahogany colour graining. Two layers of matt glaze (100%) were then applied before we started working in using brushes. There are many different tools that are used to create the arrangement of the wood fibers within sheets of wood used in furniture and construction but for this specific sample piece I used graining brushes (as shown on the left) to pull streaks of dry dark red-brown paint down the canvas. The two main brushes we used were a natural hair graining brush which is long and flat with distinct clumps of hair used to build texture, while the other brush is half natural and half synthetic hair; while the synthetic hair creates sharp lines, the natural hair helps blend it out, thinning down the paint to a softer transition.





Wood graining

After using dry brushing to lightly apply paint in strips of dark brown scenic art paint, we mixed up four sample washes made from specific proportions of browns, greens, reds, blacks and whites which are designed specifically to bring out the graining tones and create a more harmonious blend between the colours. Using a natural blending brush I applied the watered down red-brown wash thinly and evenly across the canvas.

To represent different wood and different types of cuts, it's important to consider the colour and method; for example, pine - pale yellow, mahogany - dusty pink, walnut - beige and oak - yellow ochre + white bamboo







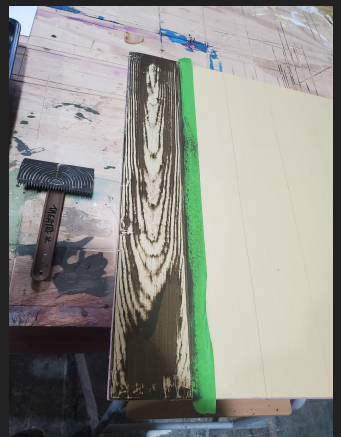
Wood graining tools

In contrast to the dry synthetic and natural hair brushes used for the other sample board, for this darker brown board I used wood graining combs; these are tools with circular grooves carved into them that are dragged along a wet layer of scenic art paint, marking knot-like rivets and patterns in its wake. To separate the wood strips and create the illusion of planks of wood, tape can be used to prevent paint bleeding across the segments. Once the paint has somewhat dried, a flogging brush (natural air, usually log lengths of hog hair) is it gently hit downwards across the plank to create spects in the graining and a blending brush is used to blend the transition between each wooden plank. One of the struggles I found with this application was that you would have to apply the exact right amount of paint for the graining to be effective, as well as ensuring that your pull on the comb was smooth and gentle because I'd you pull it too fast, the graining would look patchy and awkward.















Wood graining wash

Using a pale brown wash I coated this sample board in a thin layer of watered down scenic art paint imbued with 5% glaze to ensure good application and to bring out the detail in the graining. I applied this following the direction of the wood planks to guarantee there wouldn't be any contingencies in the good graining direction and application. Two layers of this wash was applied to strengthen the deep colour of the wood and effectively bring out the detailing within the wood graining without taking away any of the paint applied through the comb. I found this part of the process extremely satisfying and rewarding as I could see the detail in my work really coming together and creating gorgeous deep tones. Overall, I much preferred this form of wood graining as I think it looks more effective and contains more detailing which heightens the wood effect.

Final product

After waiting for the first layer of glazed wash to dry I added the second layer, making sure to keep an even spread before finally adding a layer of 100% glaze as a protective final touch.
Wood graining is used in scenic art often for flooring or wooden furniture pieces such as bars, benches, tables, ect and when wood graining you should consider the type of wood most relevant for the set you are constructing; for example, if the set you are decorating is for is supposed to be broken down and poor, using mahogany is probably inappropriate.
I really enjoyed this task, however, during this I found that the longest part of scenic art is waiting for things to dry. Additionally, comparing my work to everyone else's in my class I realised that everyone's work is ever so slightly different, meaning if you were in need of an entire floor of wood graining segments they would all look a little out of place.










Priming for texture

These were the tombstones that we made during our construction classes and are our next challenge for scenic art. We split back into the groups we were in to construct them and began by priming the gravestones white. The priming of set elements is one of the most important steps for scenic art. Our plan was to prime them in order to use idenden to add texture - giving them the illusion of stone so that they can match the scale models we built the lifesize structures after. The scale models had a mossy stone-like quality and we wanted to reflect this in our construction with the base of the cross appearing more moss-covered and the cross being slightly smoother and more stone-like.



Texturing

For the texturing we used a mixture of idendeden, sand, wood chips and water and decided to use a higher concentration of texture for the base and a smoother, more subtle texture of the cross. We used pointed sash brushes to apply the texture in the crevices and hard-to-reach spots, while using a smaller roller to apply the idenden in larger areas. Use of the roller also provided a subtle stippled texture and smoothed out some of the roughness of the sash brush.
One of our main objectives through this step was to hide the abnormalities such as the obvious breaks and seams in the plywood and add depth to the structure.








Grey priming layer





After filling, priming white, ad using idenden texturing, the next step was to mix a grey undercoat which we then applied to the gravestones in order to prime them to the correct colour before we add further detailing. Overall, we added two layers of this paint to ensure even coverage and a strong base coat for when we later add more colour.







Adding detail

After the two priming layers, we got to my favorite part of this project; adding the details. We used sash brushes to apply thin layers of dark green-brown tones (using burnt umber and mat green scenic art paint) then used a dry brush to blend and spread the colour. We started with a lighter shade and then went in again with darker tones, keeping the base as the darkest element and then lightning the areas that would see more light. We then went in on the corners and ridges with a lighter grey tone using a dry brush. My team and I decided we wanted our gravestone to be very green-oriented and therefore later went in with a stippling brush to add even more green and give it a mossy feel.





Adding a wash

After looking at our work from a distance I found that it looked too light and the darker colours look a little out of place, so I decided to add awash to deepen the colour and help it fit together. I missed matt green with burnt umber and watered it down to create a thin green-brown layer which I them coated the gravestone in, starting with the base and as it dried I added more layers on top to deepen the colour further; using a synthetic sponge to blend it in. However, I accidentally added too much paint in some areas leading to drips, but as a group we decided this look actually worked quite well, leading to us making the decision to keep the drips of excess paint down the stone to give it a damp, run down effect. We decided this made it look quite horror-esc.











Adding synthetic moss

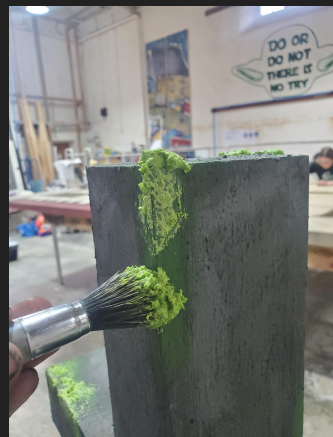
The gravestones we were decorating are not new; they're old and rundown; partly because it makes it easier to get away with making mistakes as first year designers and partly because old objects tell much more of a story - I've found that's the most important part of the set design process; giving the set elements a story, an age, an environment through aging. I piled up the moss to imply age, decay and the damp, dark environment in which they have remained.





The moss is made up of a combination of green dyed wood chips, glaze and PVA glue to hold the components together. I used an old beaten up sash brush to apply the moss (it's very important that you wash the brush up immediately or it will harden due to the PVA glue). Even though the most starts off as a bright, putrid green and looks quite out of place, however, as it dried it did darken. It was still rather an eyesore but I do think it helped to tie the whole piece together.





Very last steps

In the mood board we were provided by Dave the tombstones were covered in lichen, so we decided to add splotches of white and yellow to match the images provided. I mixed a combination of yellow ochre and yellow with water and another white to match the colours on the pictures and marked them into the stone.









I started by trying to apply the paint with a brush in circles but I found this to be too big and messy, so I instead resorted to using my thumb to create nice splotches of lichen which I found to work considerably well.







Priming for texture

This was the final project we made within our construction module and is based on a scale model of the ghostbusters firehouse from the film. This set is made up on four components; two front flats and two side flats, mostly composed of wood with a few foam elements for the added detailing. This whole set was then painted white with a priming layer in preparation for the texture detailing and colour.

The main problem we found with this task was that the wood is extremely absorbent and therefore a lot of the paint was needed in order to cover all four flats.



Texturing the bricks

The top halves of the flats are almost entirely red brick, therefore we had to first texture the brick pattern onto the wood. For this we used a very helpful wooden block with the accurate length and width of real bricks that we used as a reference to apply the bricks with electrical tape before we used rollers to plaster a mixture of idenden, sand and water on top before peeling the tape to reveal the brick patterns underneath. Idenden drying time varies depending on the thickness of the layer applied but thankfully this layer was moderately thn and the sand inside helped to absorb moisture.













Painting the bricks

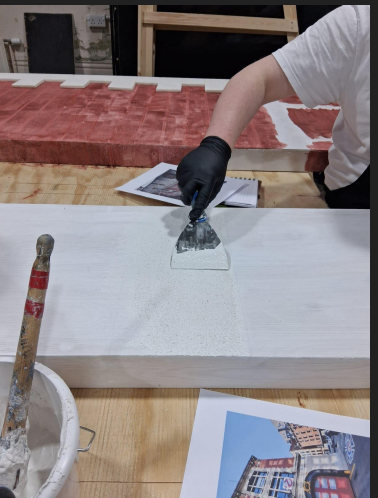
We mixed a blend of red, burnt umber, yellow ochre, brown and a little green to contrast the colour and darken the tone. This made for the initial layer of colour on the bricks, however, we discovered we would need a number of layers to bring out the colour enough. We found that the colour clung better to the textured elements of the bricks due to the send soaking up the paint which ended up working quite well as it make the gaps between the lines appear more like mortar lines.

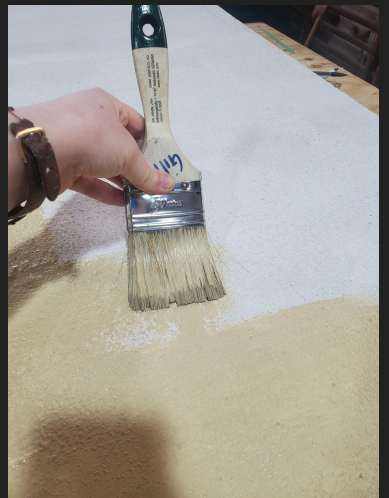




The render

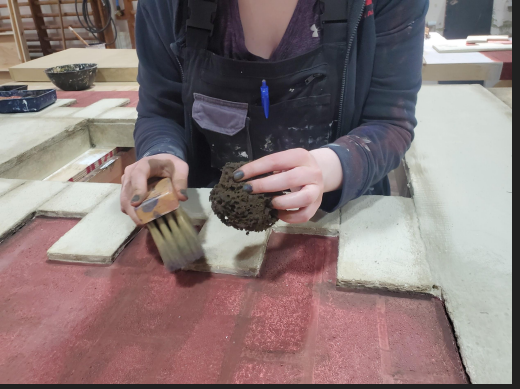
Using another send, water and jesmonite mixture we applied the texture with scrapers before using rollers to apply it evenly. Once it was evenly spread, we added extra layers of thicker texture to give the illusion of brickwork and some more visual interest and once it was dry we added the pre-mixed colour. We painted the lower levels of all the flats, making sure to avoid the circles that would be painted navy later.
The main problem we faced when doing this was that we ran out of paint mixture and Eirys, who mixed the paint originally was not present, therefore we had to experiment with different colours in an attempt to find the right colour match. After a long time trying we eventually got to the correct mix of yellow ochre, white, burnt umber, black and water.




Aging

Aging was my favorite part of this process. After mixing a watered down burnt umber we applied a thin layer of the paint using an old sash brush and natural sponge, starting at the windows and working our way across the set. After burnt umber we went in with a black, and then a dirty green to add deeper colour and contrast to the set and make it look more lived in. while we were doing this, our classmates were using other types of brushes on different parts of the set to build dirt and age. We strategically swapped around so that there wouldn't be contrast between the areas that we were working on.



















Building a commissioned set

Over easter I was lucky enough to work on a 3-week internship, working as a scenic carpenter and scenic artist on the set of Dosbarth Miss prydderch a llridr y Lleisiau. We were provided a scale model to work off, with flats resembling a classroom, bookshelves, cabinets, wall decorations and a whole set of woodland elements when the classroom transforms into a forest of strange child-like decorated flora.

The designer told us he wanted the set to feel wes-anderson inspired - hence the yellow trim around the walls, and many hidden elements such as a secret cupboard in the bookshelves, flipping blackboard and notice board, secret compartments for concealed set elements and hidden doors around the set.

Making the fantasy plants

The first thing we made was the fantasy plants, made to look like they had been drawn by children that pop out when the classroom transforms into a strange forest. After cutting all of the plants out, they were given a white priming layer before colour was added. Each plant had its own colour pallet, meaning we had to mix many different colours to get to the right shades for each of the plants. They each were given an underlayer of their prime colour before detail was added with smaller brushes such as the spots of the mushrooms, and a feather duster was then used to add an almost marble-like effect on the stems and leaves of some selected plants o best match the models we were given.









Plant-decorated hills

Originally, each of the hills were going to be decorated in a different style, corresponding to the shapes they were cut into, as depicted in the scale model. However, our lead director on the build (Dave Atkinson) decided all three hills should be decorated in the same style to make life easier and more coordinated. They were decorated with brisols and rosocs yellows, grees, blues and whites and applied the paint with sponges and lay in brushes to give them the grass-like patterns before giving them a thin layer of glaze.









Priming and painting the flats

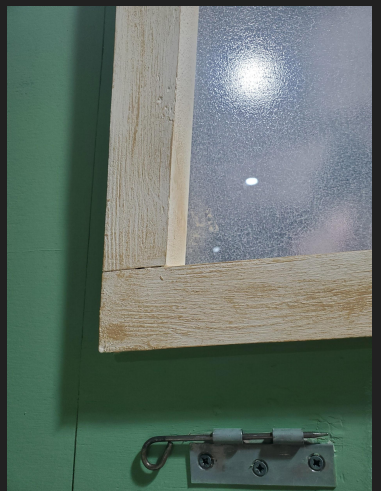
Once all of the flats had been constructed we moved onto the priming. The window frames were the first things to be painted with a soft cream colour and the blackboard with specialist blackboard paint.

The colour for the flats was mixed for us by the scenic artists and was essentially a very watered down version of the end colour as presented on the scale model. We did this as a prime coat as opposed to the white prime layer that we were taught in class because, according to Dave, if you scratch off a layer of paint, you won't be able to tell because the layer underneath will match the layer on top. Additionally, the watered down paint sunk into the wood due to its high level of absorption, makin it easier to paint later on.

Aging the set

There were three main methods we used for aging down this set to give it age and character; airbrushing, dry brushing and button polish. I most enjoyed the airbrushing, which was used for the majority of the flats; around the walls, windows and skirting. Inside the paint compartment was a thin, dark burnt umber. The third year scenic artists taught us how to correctly apply this paint, showing us how twisting the end nozzles changes the direction of spray for different angles around the set, and how the distance from the surface affects the distribution of paint that comes out. The next was dry brushing; used on the window frames, notice board and blackboard, where old brushes were used to apply pale grey/brown to the frames to age them and dirty them down to make the set look more lived in. the last thing we did for this part of the set was applying a thin layer of button polish to the panelling/wainscotting which gave the yellow this old rotten, mouldy look. We used this very sparingly just to add a bit of visual interest and was the first time I had ever used this substance which made me think about what over tools that are commonly used for other materials but that can also be used in set design to create unua effects.









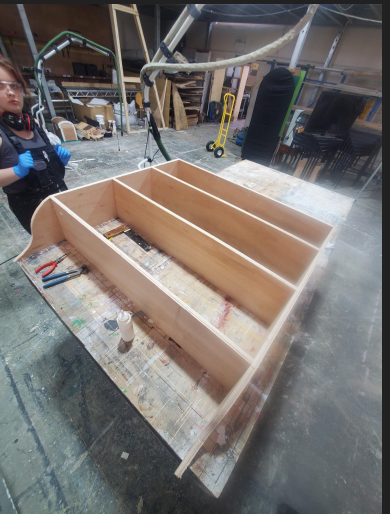
The bookshelf



This was the only set element that us first years took lead in and was almost entirely constructed and designed by us; it was the classrooms bookshelves which the designer wanted to have a secret compartment hidden inside the bottom shelf. After constructing the shelves we mixed a priming layer of brown to match the scale model. This was significantly watered down and applied to the wood as a base layer before about 3 thicker layers of paint were applied in order to get it to the right colour. The books were a vacform ordered from online and were designed to look like old, leather bound books, unlike what the model suggests, therefore we made the decision not to stick to the pale, multicoloured books and instead choose darker browns, blues, greens and occasional yellow book to give the illusion of leather bound books. We painted a layer of glaze to the plastic before applying two layers of scenic art paint on each of the books then adding shadow and aging using a watered down, navy blue to sink into the cracks of the books and below the gold/silver and bronze detailing we painted onto the back of the binding on the books to give it deeper dimension. After each of the books had dried, we used a strong adhesive to stick the books into the shelves and then age the bookcase down with the rest of the set with a dry brush and burnt umber paint.

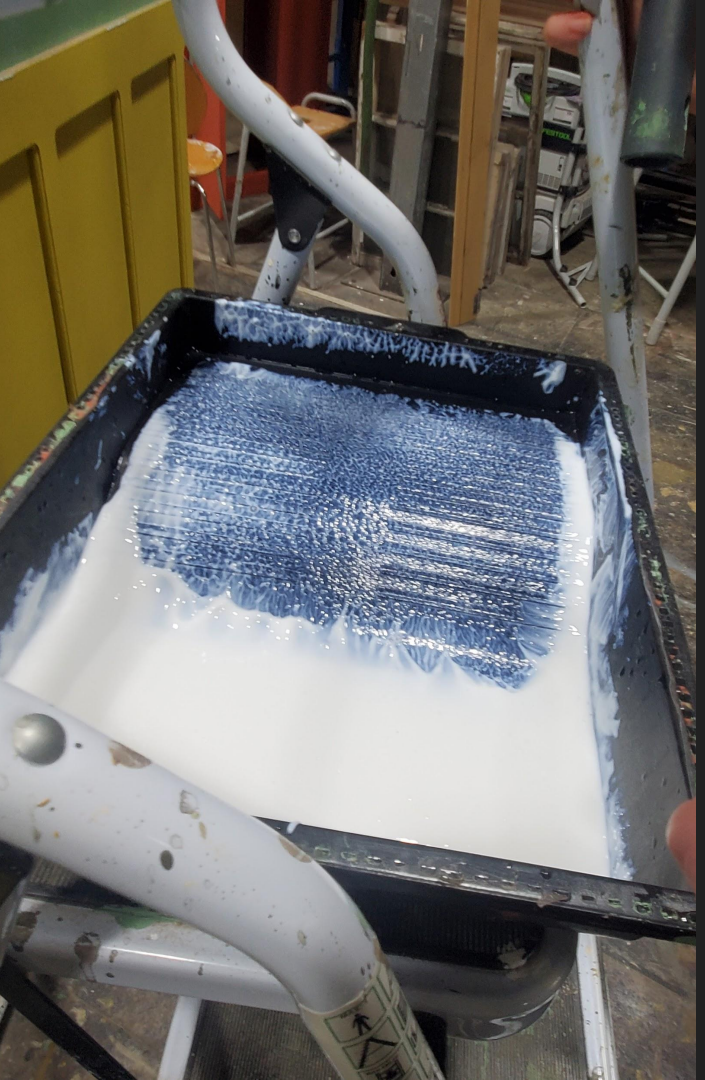












Final step; glaze

The last thing we applied to the set was a thin layer of scenic glaze. For the wider areas such as the green walls, a large roller was used, for the yellow paneling we used smaller rollers, then for the final small areas that were difficult to get to - for example the borders of the blackboard - we used smaller brushes to spread an even layer across the set. This is for protection of the set and paint, in addition to creating a better and stronger impression of the set under scenic lighting and is always the final step to be done on a set.

Its base is primarily PVA and therefore if the layer is too thick, it will leave a strange white residue on the set; this is why it's so important to ensure the layer is think and evenly spread.





Wake the tiger

Wake the tiger is the world's first ‘amazement park’ and is the uk's biggest immersive experience, taking place in a large warehouse, visitors are encouraged to interact with the set as the follow the storyline through multiple stories of fantasy packed labyrinths of fascination. Each room has a unique fantasy feel, taking inspiration from the world around them and reusing old broken items from the ‘real world’, wake the tiger seeks to “ensure a sustainable future. Whether you're young or old at heart, wake the tiger offers an unforgettable experience that will amaze and inspire.” (Wake The Tiger Amazement Park, n.d.)

Its my favorite example of set, constructed and decorated, not for the purpose of actors to perform within its scenery, but steps back and allows the viewer to determine the story as if they are walking through their own self guided fantasy where they are the main character.

Its built within a large warehouse, with each room having a different story to tell; set in a different dimension or another world of fantasy exploration. You follow the rooms around, with no parameters of the order that you need to follow and multiple doors leading in different directions, each telling a different tale of how this paint factory was transformed by the growth of mushrooms into another world as they access the network of other-worldly dimensions.

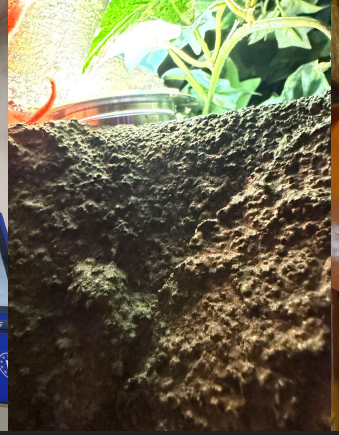




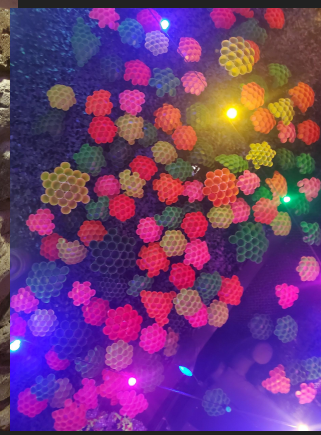








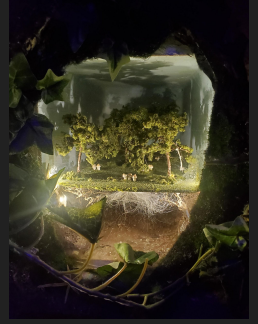




The scenic art in Wake the tiger

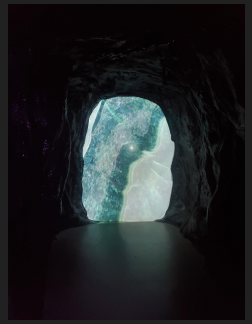
Each room is a utopia of scenic art, texture, detailing and visual euphoria with every single room, some spanning tens of meters high and long, covered in life-imitating realism. Some key details I noticed was the rust above the ticket machine - even something so simple was coated in painstaking detail - which looked to me like it had been a layer or orange/brown layer of paint applied with a sponge around the piping with a layer of glaze on top. I also found evidence of jesmonite for materials resembling dirt, wood and metal which had been painted and glazed over, giving the areas deep detail and colour and making them appear so real, additionally I think jesmonite was used to form the bricks that formed some of the rooms walls. After starting the scenic art module I hunted around specifically for objects/materials and techniques I could recognise and under layers of decoration after careful consideration I found objects I wouldn't have ever considered using before; such as pool noodles that had been sliced in half and snaked around the room like vines - almost everything in the rooms had been construed out of soft materials; like foam or polystyrene due to the large amount of children that visit the site every day. Additionally due to this fact, everything would have to be extremely secure to its home so that nothing could be torn off or fall and I think it would be very interesting to see it done in person, because all of my ideas on the construction and decoration are just speculation; in fact Wake the tiger is one of dream job ambitions because it's just such a stunning, mind melding place that tells so many fascinating stories.



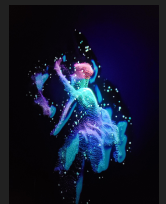



The OUTERverse






KEEP OFF

PORTAL