Design Realisation

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.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Critically analyse a specific text and dramatic genre from a design perspective and understand ‘visual communication’.
2. Apply design methodologies in the exploration of a given design brief.
3. Identify, refine and demonstrate a variety of technical and production processes in the realisation of appropriately complex design ideas.

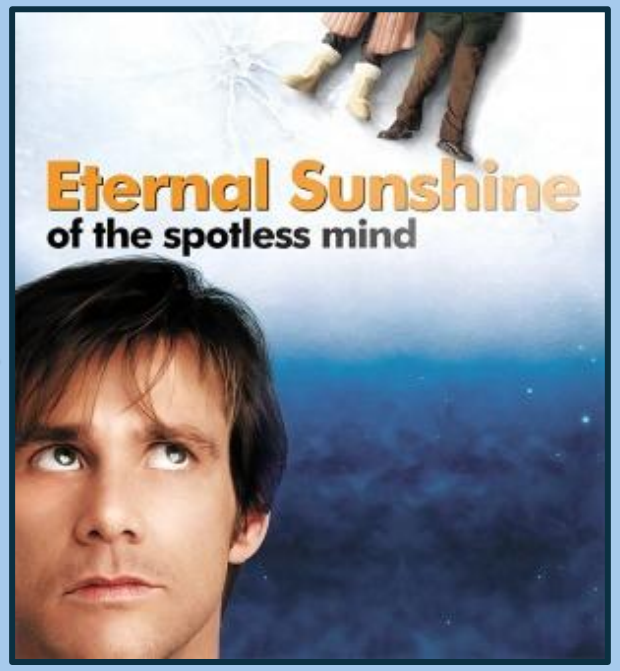
Module Brief:

Task One → You will focus on compiling a process workbook – a record of all the areas covered in your lectures along with ideas on how this newfound knowledge contributes to your methodology. Your process workbook will outline your journey through the module and reflect on your learning and skills gained.
Task Two → Having selected the scene from The Adding Machine, you are required to produce constructed elements for the scene. These constructed elements must take on-board Rice’s stage directions and should create the scene.

Task 3 → At the end of the module, as a group, you are to give a presentation. The presentation will inform the audience about how you have solved the practical problems demanded by the brief, focusing on production technique, methods and problem solving. Although this is not considered a full ‘performance’ you will need to understand the context that your elements exist in and show its full potential for a ’performance’. You will speak for 10 minutes each.
Task 4 → Reflect upon what you’ve learnt throughout the module and commit those thoughts and reflections to a five-hundred-word evaluation.

What Inspires You?

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind



(Flicks, Year Unknown)

What inspires me is bizarre and distorted realities, such as the one in Eternal Sunshine, which explores dreams and memories and how they change in our perception over time. I like unrealistic environments that are able to present real things in more emotionally accurate ways, through its distortion.

I find distortion inspiring as I don't think art needs to be an exact copy of our world in order for it to communicate real life thoughts and emotions and places. Certain places in our minds are remembered in ways that are coloured by emotions, for example, you may only remember a certain place in the rain or in the sun or on a certain night/with certain people.

(Daniels, 2023)

(Prime Video, Year Unknown)



Created in 2004, Directed by Michel Gondry, designed by both Gondry and French artist Pierre Bismuth. Eternal Sunshine explores a reality where we are able to have certain parts of our memory erased if we wanted to.



Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

(*Philadelphia Film Society, Year Unknown*)



I like when things are broken down and opened up in strange but effective ways. Almost as if the set is coming to life. I also like when a minimal amount of CGI is used. For example, in one scene Joel is shown to be walking down a street and when he gets to the end he's back at the beginning, gradually the street signs fade and disappear. This was all done by hand, no CGI, each shop sign and street sign was repainted to create this effect, they physically created a street with identical ends. Eternal Sunshine is my favourite film, a large part of that is due to the imagination and execution of the set and props.

Scene can be found at: https://youtu.be/NTmlNigifSI?si=oOjW5RWttOf03vVl

The scene I chose to share with the class is towards the end of the movie, where Joel is in his last memory of Clementine and the house they're in begins to crumble and the tide takes it away from him. This scene has everything I love about the movie in it, the emotionally devastating dialogue which breaks the characters' fourth wall but not ours, and the scenic design representing the breakdown of their relationship. It carries through the idea of our memories distorting, and the lighting imitates a flashlight being held on Joel, following him. It's interesting how the director chose to limit our visibility of the background, as if Joel's memory crumbling means he can't remember the details of the background anymore. The montage at the end of the scene personifies Joel driving back through his memories (as though his life with her is flashing before his eyes), created in the set makes it more effective and realistic, bringing us into his dream emotionally.

Everybody Rides The Carousel



(The Meryl Streep Foundation, 2010)

Released in 1976, directed by John Hubley. Depicts the different stages of life through distorted animation



(The Meryl Streep Foundation, 2010)

The link can be found here: https://youtu.be/A5bXws0hAu4?si=ojU47JUrxfFUfSij



I love the way animation can be used to manipulate bodies. For example, in the images to the right, Hubley plays with their size, communicating their emotions and nostalgia towards their childhood (when he gets a splinter and she comforts him). I think it's inspiring because of the expressive opportunities you can't physically get in real life. I mainly love stop motions and Claymation, as it's a combination of animation and miniatures (which I really enjoy making). I think it's an inspiring skill to work in miniatures and animation, and I love the removal of limitations within reality.

Alice

Released in 1988, Alice was directed and designed by Jan Svankmajer. Alice in Wonderland has been one of my favourite stories since I was a child, as I had an incredible pop-up book of the story. This Czeck adaptation of the story blends live action and stop motion to create a creepy and creative sight. I love the use of the scale and the creativity in the puppets. I found this film inspiring as you can not only use these methods of distortion and unease to create deeper meaning (like in Eternal Sunshine and Everybody Rides the Carousel) but they can also be used in fantasy genres, I love fantasy due to it being a translation of imagination onto the screen. There is no sense, and it creates a complete escape.

You can find the link here: https://youtu.be/tK_l74cSPGY?si=tD2tCyFL-5VIwsxo



(Museum of Arts and Design, 2025)



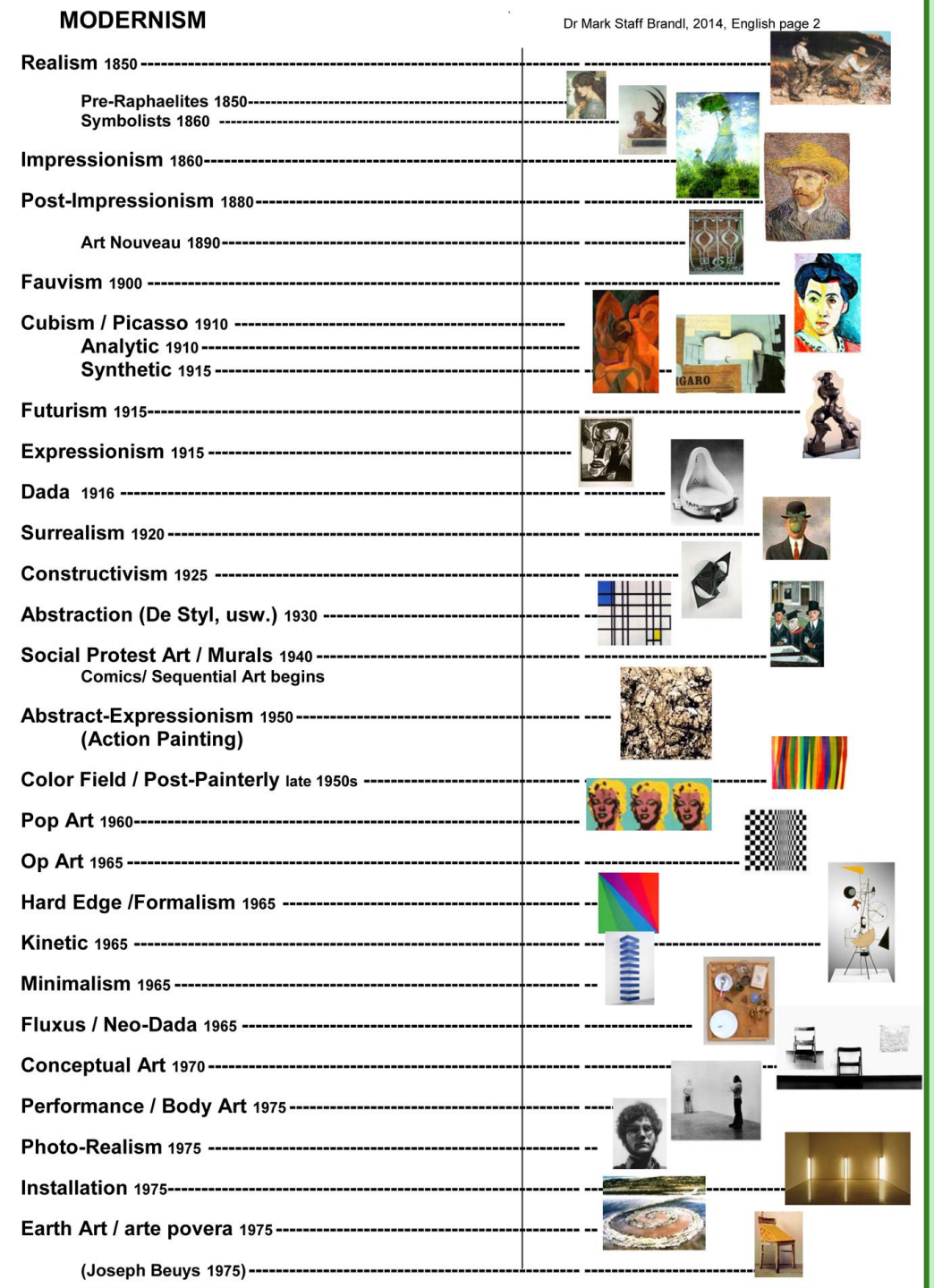
(Vincent, 2020)

←

(Brayton, 2016)

→





Art History Timeline

Between 1870 and 1970 there was a dramatic increase in art movements, before then, art had moved gradually between each one. There are now a large variety of movements, often happening at the same time as each other. I believe this developed with the loosening of limitations in what art could be, as more artists felt like their work was valuable (even if just to themselves) a wider range of art was produced.

Although the timeline to the left centres around 1850 onwards, before then there was Pre-Historic Art (cave drawings and early work mainly on stone) around 30-20,000 BCE, Ancient Art (Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, etc.) spanning from 2500 BCE to 400 BCE, Medieval Art (gothic, Romanesque) around 1000 CE, the Renaissance in the 15th century, Baroque in the 17th century, Rococo in the 18th century, and Romanticism in the early 19th century.

← *(Brandl, 2012)*

Does Inspiration Work and Why?



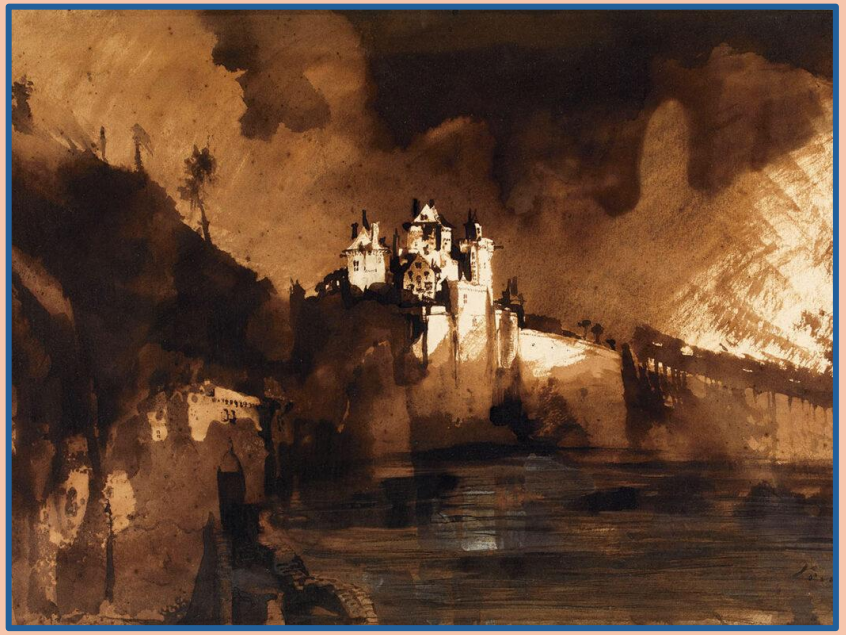
(Picasso, 1937)

What is Art?

Art is a method of communication that can inspire or encourage thoughts and conversations. It is subjective and not about the level of technical skill, but more the level of thought and consideration put into it. Art has the ability to translate experiences across the world, as well as to change people's opinions.

I think inspiration works in subconscious ways, rather than a direct way. That's why it's important to constantly take in art and media as we are constantly being inspired without realising it. It takes time for something we've seen to incubate.

Art can affect our sense of self in positive and negative ways. It is the result of an emotional response that has the ability to evoke more emotional responses from strangers.



(Hugo, 1857)



(Millet, 1957)

Degenerate Art and the Nazi Party Influence on Art

The Nazi party used propaganda art was a key part of how they presented themselves to the public and gained attention and support.
Joseph Goebbels, in charge of propaganda, wanted complete control over all forms of expression. This was to make sure all forms of art praised the party and their agenda whilst alienating anyone who opposed them.

As a result, everything was surveyed and censored if it didn't abide by what they considered 'good' art. The Nazis thought that all art should fall into the bracket of Realism, presenting the world exactly how it looked.
Any art they didn't approve of, was considered 'Degenerate Art' (Entartete Kunst)

After Hitler's rise to power and the increase of censorship, as well as the overall increasing danger of staying in Germany, many artists fled to other parts of Europe- mainly France. *(Jones, Year Unknown)*





(Holocaust Encyclopaedia, Year Unknown)

(The Wiener Holocaust Library, Year Unknown)

Hugo Boss:

(*Crouch, 2016*)

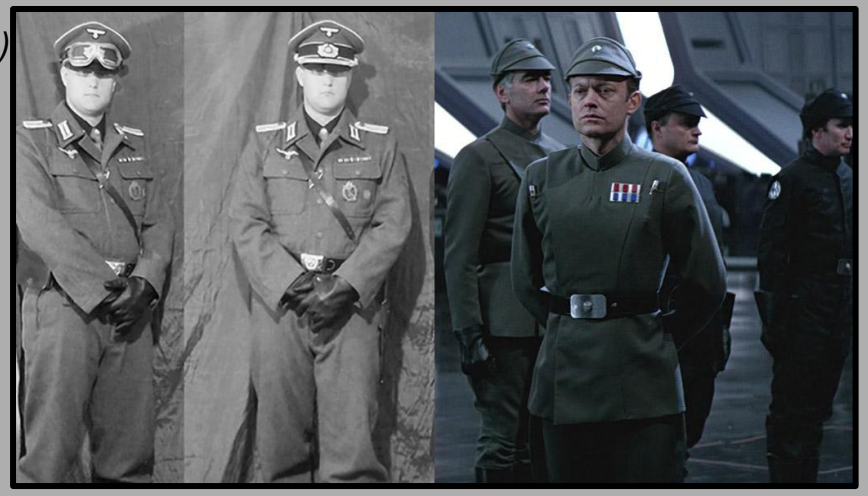
According to *Paoletti (2017)*, Hugo Boss began his fashion label in 1931, in Metzingen, Germany.

Boss joined the Nazi party himself and became a sponsoring member of the SS, making monthly donations. Manufacturing uniforms for the SS, although not designing them - they produced various other uniforms for the Nazi party throughout the years, beginning in 1924 when Boss merely owned a factory rather than a fashion label.

By 1940, the company started using slave labour from concentration camps to produce large orders. Boss was later fined and stripped of his right to own a company, post-war.



(*Percival, 2015*)



The Nazi party went on to influence Star Wars costumes, as well as various parts of how The Empire is depicted.

Berlatsky (2017) claims the stormtroopers are a direct reference to Nazi Stormtroopers, and the Imperial military uniforms are reflective of German Nazi dress.

The costume designer John Mollo claims George Lucas (the director) wanted the soldiers to look “totalitarian” and “fascist”, hence the correlation between them and the Nazi party.

You can see in the background of this image how similarly they appear to the Nazi party through their imposing signs and stage, mimicking actual Nazi party designs



(*NM, Year Unknown*)



(*British Pathe, Year Unknown*)

Russian Avant-Garde Art

In 1861 Russia's peasants were released from serfdom, land could be owned in collective communities, rather than only having private property. A new kind of thinking opposing the Old Russian Orthodox traditions came to the forefront, ideas surrounding scepticism towards religion and a belief in progress. These two ways of thinking grew as a result of the founding of St. Petersburg in 1703. This created a split in Russian society. *(Smolik, Year Unknown)*

According to *Parker (Year Unknown)*, as these two growing and contrasting attitudes developed, it was believed that a rejection of traditional art was necessary to understand modern reality and society. Gradually experimenting and reaching out of traditional and pre-existing art styles, methods, and subject matters.
It took a utilitarian approach, moving away from creating art to be beautiful or something aesthetic to look at.

(Illustromania, Year Unknown) →





(Illustromania, Year Unknown)

Spanning across painting, design, and architecture. Recognisably bold colour palettes and fragmented/abstracted compositions and designs, integrating technology. With the intention to reflect social, political, and cultural upheaval. They wanted to push boundaries of art to inspire opposing boundaries in society. (*Illustromania, Year Unknown)*

Avant-Garde Costume Designs:

Avant Garde art covers a wider range of styles, whilst constructivism is a specific style of art that could fall into Avant Garde, as it pushes the boundaries of traditional styles of art. *(Willette, 2020)*

The image below is a costume design by Alexandra Exter, for the first Sci-Fi film 'Aelita' in 1924. Her designs were bold and reinvented classics into a completely new style. I love this design and how it uses the fragmentation of Avant-Garde art to create a supernatural effect. *(Wainwright, 2014)*





(Potter, 2014)

The design above is by Tatiana Bruni for the opera 'Bolt' in 1979. I think it's interesting how much movements such as cubism have influenced the development of the Avant-Garde style.

(Soviet Visuals, 2018)



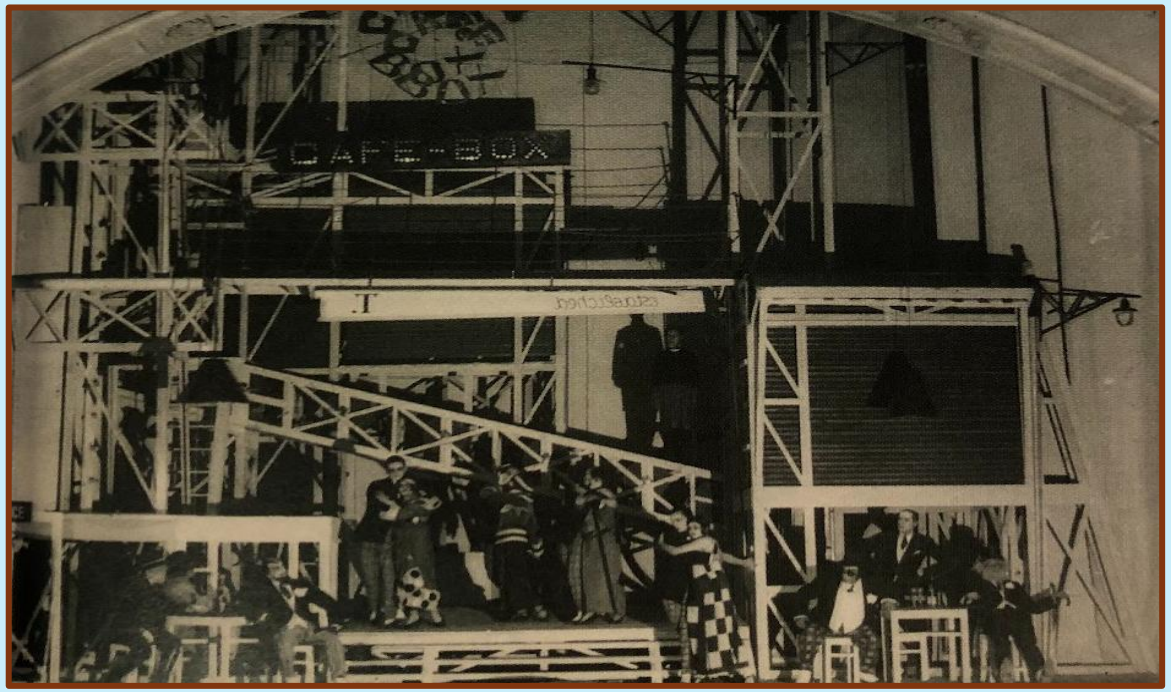
The above designs are by Vadym Meller, an artist, designer, architect, and illustrator. I love his art style and the abstract but effective designs, presenting a chaos in the silhouette of the costumes. I think the way they are shown in motion interesting because not only do we get a sense of shape and colour, but a sense of atmosphere from each character.

(Ceremonial Weaving, 2025) →

The dress below was designed by Natalia Sergeevna Goncharova in 1924-25. I think this dress is the perfect culmination of the design to the left into something physical.



Avant-Garde Set Designs:



Photographer unknown,
Scene from G.K. Chesterton's 'The Man Who Was Thursday', 1923.
(Hern, 2014, p. 21)

1927-1930, Designs by El Lissitzky, Prepared by Vsevolod Meierkhold, for Sergei Tretiakov's 'I want A Baby' (Hern, 2014, p. 27)



Photographer unknown.
Scene of 'Dance of the Lads' from Fernand Crommelynck's 'Magnanimous Cuckold', designs by Liubov Popova, in 1922.
(Hern, 2014, p. 17)



My research into Avant-Garde art in the last module included Nick Hern's book 'Russian Avant-Garde Theatre', these images are some sets included in the book. I particularly like the top right set as it stands out from the usually 'playground' design of ladders and poles, I like the use of curves and how Lissitzky still worked in levels.
Constructivist/Avant-Garde set design are not my favourite style as they feel stripped back, which can be helpful for actors to work with, but I prefer the costume designs in this style over the sets, as I think the costume designers played with the combination of cubism and unique shapes more than the set designers.

Artists Throughout The Movements:



(Feibusch, 1946)

Hans Feibusch:

Feibusch (1898-1998) was a German painter and sculptor, who fled Nazi Germany, becoming a prolific mural artist in Britain. Hans Feibusch's style takes influence from Renaissance art, focussing on the human figure *(Chichester Cathedral, 2023)*. I find his work expressive. I like the textured brushstrokes and the fact he depicts realistic shapes and shadows contrasting with unrealistic colours.



(Feibusch, Year Unknown)

Paul Klee:

(Klee, 1928)



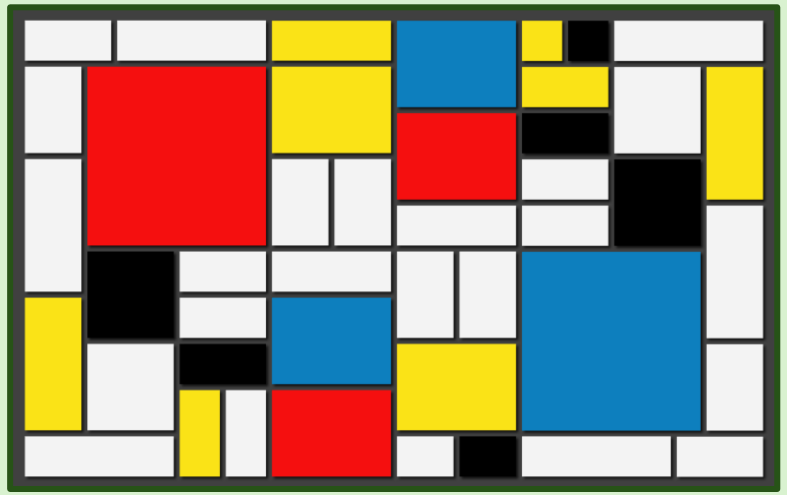
Paul Klee was a Swiss-German artist born in 1879 and died in 1940. Klee explored styles of expressionism, cubism, and surrealism *(Tate, Year Unknown, a)*. His influence of cubism can be seen clearly in works such as the one to the right, the division of objects reduced to their simplified geometric shapes. I prefer his work to the right than the Cat and Bird work to the left, I find the perspective strange and unsettling.



(Klee, 1928)

This style reminds me of the illustrator Dave McKean, who has worked on Neil Gaiman books. The smooth and blended style but off-putting and subtle distortion to create unease.

Artists Throughout The Movements:



(Mondrian, 1930)

Piet Mondrian:

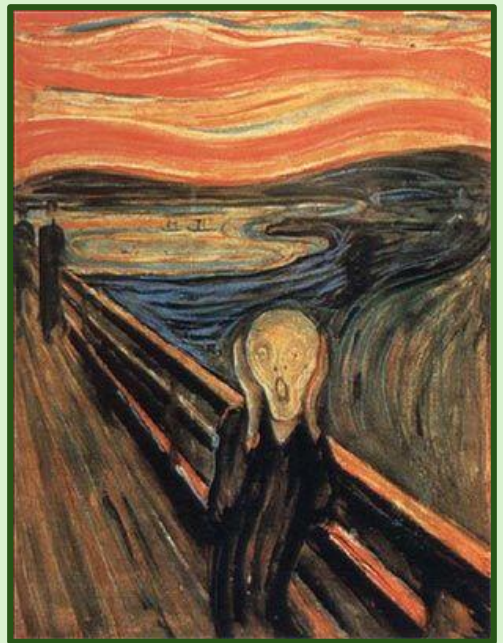
(Mondrian, 1908) →



Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) was a Dutch artist and considered a pioneer of abstract art. Beginning as an expressive landscape artist, Mondrian developed into the complete opposite *(Tate, Year Unknown, b)*. Mondrian started out as an art teacher, creating naturalistic landscape paintings, after an exhibition on Vincent Van Gogh in 1905 Mondrian took inspiration from the impressionists and began to work vivid colours into his work. After witnessing the beginning of cubism in Paris and Picasso's work, he made the extreme transition to abstraction *(Ashby, 2022)*. I find this transition between art movements extremely impressive.

I personally prefer his earlier work, like the painting above, as I dislike cubist pieces. I feel cubism lacks everything I like in art, variety of shapes, movement, life, and emotion.

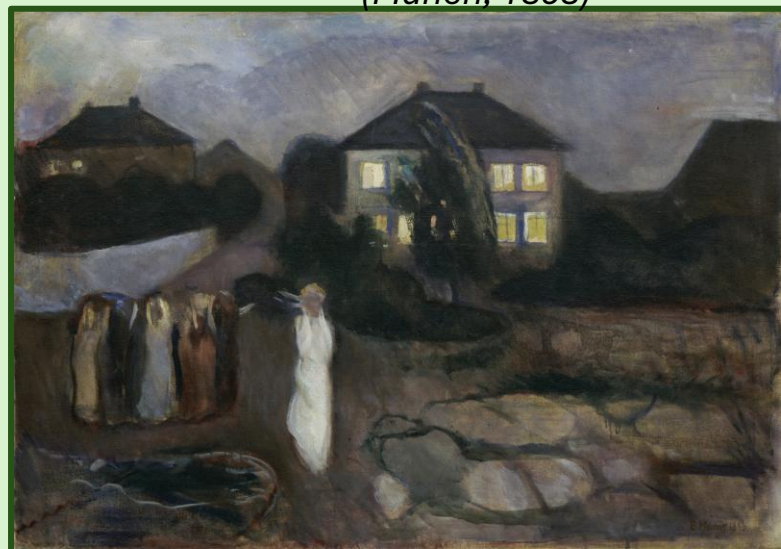
Edvard Munch:



(Munch, 1893) ←

Edvard Munch (1863-1944) was a Norwegian painter. Munch's style emerged from a mixture of influences from Van Gogh and Paul Gaugin, alongside being encouraged to do 'Soul Painting' (*Tate, Year Unknown, c)* – where you paint from your true mental and psychological state no matter the logic or sense. This is where his clear emotive and raw style comes from. I love Edvard Munch's work. He is one of my favourite artists due to his expressive brushstrokes and chaotic perception of the world as well as his depiction of his own distorted self-perception.

(Munch, 1893)



Artists Throughout The Movements:

(Block, Year Unknown)



Martin Block:

Although it is difficult to find much information on the artist Martin Block, I was able to find he was an artist working around the 1930s, working partly in Germany. Looking at the painting to the left, he was a cubist artist. I like the composition of the painting, and I think although the shapes have sharp corners and no cohesion, it has a calming effect through the soft colours and blending. I think his style of cubism is a lot more expressive than Mondrian's.

(Block, 1933)



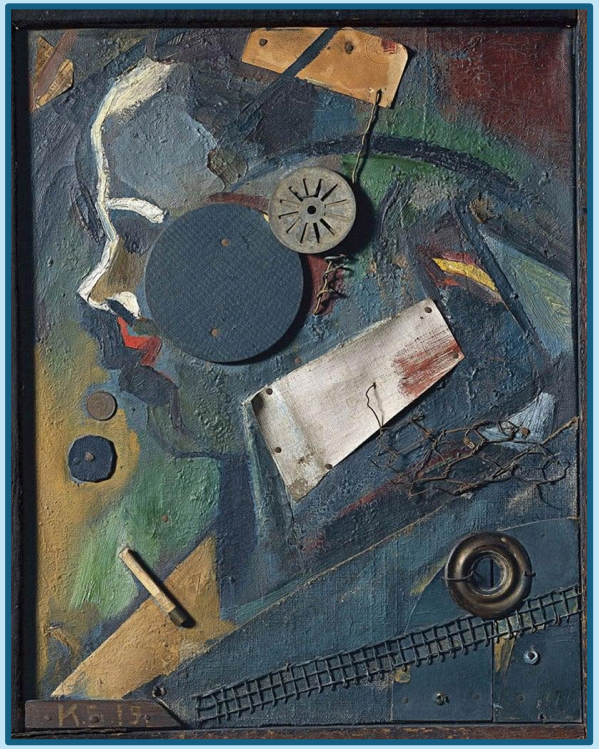
Kurt Schwitters:

Kurt Schwitters was born in 1887 and died in 1948, he was a German artist working in a variety of mediums, but his most notable work, and my personal favourites, were his collages. Schwitters was largely influenced by Dadaism but developed his own style known as 'Merz', the name came from a scrap piece of paper used in one of his works *(Ben Uri, Year Unknown)* . Although the collage on the left doesn't have much substance to it, I think his piece on the right is really effective. I love the colour palette and different senses of texture. I think his creation of a figure through the combination of objects makes you think about the painting more than you would a realism portrait. I think he's quite cubist in his composition.



← *(Schwitters, 1923)*

(Schwitters, 1919) →



Artists Throughout The Movements:

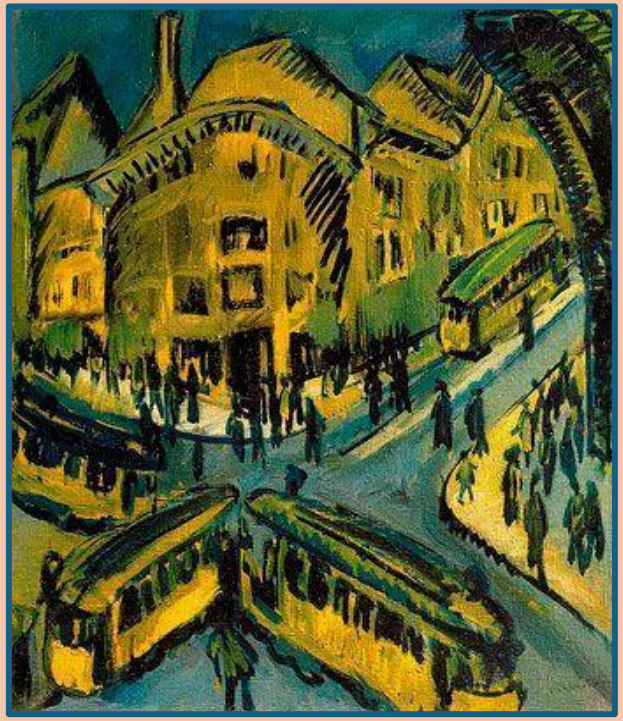


Ernst Ludwig Kirchner:

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner was a German painter (1880-1938). Kirchner was an expressionist painter and one of the founders of 'The Bridge' (Die Brucke), an artists group helping to establish expressionism in the 20th century art world. After volunteering in World War One, he suffered a breakdown and was soon discharged *(Tate, Year Unknown, d)*. I find Kirchner's work exciting and vibrant, I love his imaginative technique which distorts the perspective slightly, such as in the street painting to the right. I think his choice of colour accurately captures a sense of light whilst not being exactly true to reality.

←*(Kirchner, 1913)*

(Kirchner, 1912) →





Emil Nolde:

Emil Nolde (1867-1953) was a German painter, working primarily in oil paint and watercolour. Nolde began painting in the 1890s, moving into impressionism in 1905, expressionism in 1910, and exploring primitive art around 1914 *(Tate, Year Unknown, e)*. Nolde's exploration of a range of styles and his development of a 'freer' style can be seen within his work. I love how Nolde is able to create an interpretive space through suggestive brushstrokes and layered colours. The landscape to the left becomes more detailed the longer you look at it, as you notice the red in the skyline. Whilst the figures on the right show resemblance to primitive art combined with expressionism

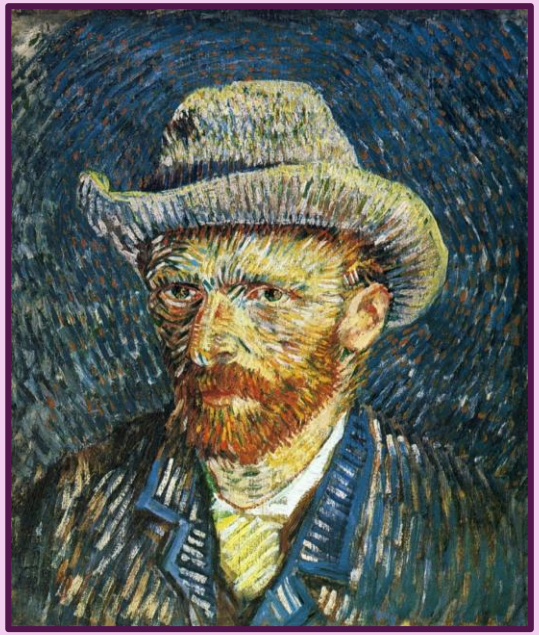
←*(Nolde, 1924)*

(Nolde, 1947) →



Artists Throughout The Movements:

Vincent Van Gogh:



(Gogh, 1887-88)

Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) was a Dutch post-impressionist painter, infamously unpopular during his lifetime, although now one of the most famous artists ever. Struggling with his mental health throughout his life, up until his death by suicide in 1890 *(The National Gallery, Year Unknown)*. Van Gogh's paintings are iconic through his unique depiction of the sky through swirls, and his clear and directional layering of marks to create depth and texture. Although Starry Night is his most favourite, the painting to the left is one of mine, I love the way you can feel the wind through the paint as if you're there watching the grass sway.



(Gogh, 1889)

Wassily Kandinsky:

(Kandinsky, 1923)



Kandinsky (1866-1944) was a Russian painter. He taught at the Bauhaus in Weimar until their forced closure due to the Nazi Party (Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Year Unknown). Kandinsky's work is extremely abstract, they feel like overwhelming explosions on paper. Although appearing random, their shapes and lines are structures and geometric, there's not as much freedom to it as you first think. This is not one of my favourite styles.

(Kandinsky, 1922)



Dada Movement:

Spanning roughly from 1915 to 1925, Dadaism began in Zurich, Switzerland. It was a reaction to World War One and nationalism, influenced by Cubism and Expressionism, it mocked materialism and nationalism in society and generated difficult questions. It was begun by a group of poets associated with the Cabaret Voltaire. The cabaret was named after someone who mocked stupidity in society. They used everyday objects to question the definition and purpose of art. They reject reason and logic. *(The Art Story, 2012, a)*


Hugo Ball al tempo del Cabaret Voltaire

(Drouot, 2025) →

I really like the chaos and angles within Marcel Janco's painting below, you can really see the influence taken from cubism. I also like how the Dada movement encompassed forms such as performance art. Although I prefer movements such as Expressionism and Surrealism, I can see how Dadaism influenced Surrealism and how this movement could connect to German Expressionism in our work on The Adding Machine and I'm interested in exploring elements of this.

(Janco, 1916)
→



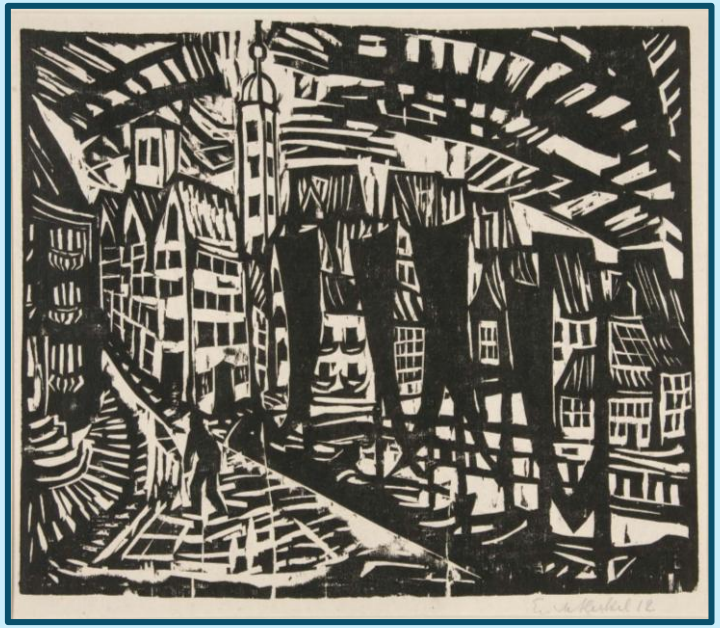
The term Dada was chosen randomly from a dictionary. The founding group liked the idea of childishness and absurdity that the word had.
Hugo Ball (1886-1927) was a co-founder of the Dada movement. He studied sociology and philosophy before becoming an artist. Ball was intensely anti-war and performed poetry using nonsensical syllables to create rhythm and a new sort of language, the art came from a lack of meaning. *(Lewis, 2020)*
The other Dada artist I looked at was Marcel Janco (1895-1984).

Expressionism Movement:

Spanning from 1905 to 1920, Expressionism emerged from Germany, led by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, as a response to the anxiety around losing authenticity and humanity in the world. It was against academic art and Impressionism. Key features being distorted form, strong colours, and exaggerated and swirling brushstrokes. Expressionist art was meant to come from within the artist and not of the outside world, they wanted to confront urbanisation and the alienation of people. *(The Art Story, 2012, b)*



(Heckel, 1919)



(Heckel, 1912)

Erich Heckel (1883-1970) was a German artist and a founding member of the Die Brucke group in 1905. Heckel wanted to collaborate and spread new ideas with other artists. *(Art Net, Year Unknown, a)*

Egon Schiele (1890-1918) was an Austrian artist who focussed on figures as subject matter, depicting them in dramatic poses in a raw style, twisting shapes to create emotion *(The Art Teacher, 2021)*. I love Egon Schiele's work, despite not being realism, I feel the expressive depiction of people captures them more realistically than a realist painting ever could, due to the intense emotion created in them, they feel alive.

(Schiele, 1913)



Both Expressionism and Impressionism rely on the senses, the difference between the two is that Expressionism uses emotions to define words, and Impressionism uses words to define emotions. The depiction of light in expressionist paintings is particularly good to look at for influence in design choices and lighting designs for the stage or screen.

Surrealism:

Surrealism spanned from 1924 to 1966, replacing Dadaism in a way. Surrealists wanted to unlock the unconscious and imagination, hoping it had the power to influence revolution. They left behind reason and rationality and saw rules of society as oppressive. They took heavy inspiration from Sigmund Freud's work, especially his 1899 book 'The Interpretation of Dreams', as they saw dreams as important for revelation. Surrealism can be hard to categorise as each artist relied on their own personal dreams to create motifs and symbolism. *(The Art Story, 2012, c)*



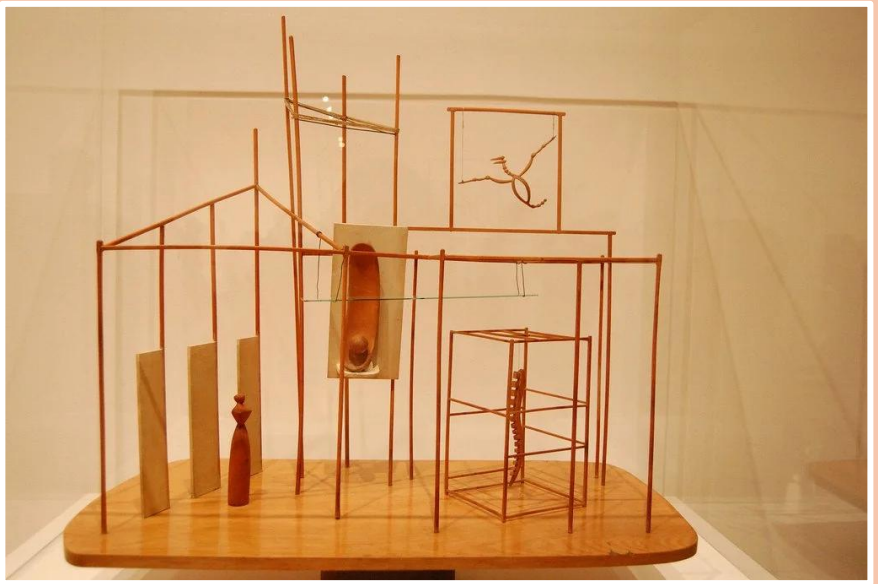
Salvador Dali (1904-1989) was a Spanish artist (sculptor, painter, and more) who turned to Surrealism in 1929. He is one of the most famous Surrealist artists and believed in an eccentricity to art *(Art UK, Year Unknown)*. I think his paintings depict dreams and the subconscious more accurately than most due to the randomness and absurdism.

(Dali, 1934)
←

(Giacometti, 1950)



(Giacometti, 1932)



Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) was a Swiss artist and an incredible sculptor. Giacometti was dissatisfied with realism in the depiction of human form and so started created with plaster models cast in bronze. He used objects he felt linked to experiences and people in his life *(Iker, 2024)*. I love his bronze sculptures of people, as pictured at the top left, I feel like there's a significant sadness to them, but an incredible expression achieved in the material.

Cubism:

Spanning from 1907 to 1922, Cubism developed in the aftermath of the experimentation done by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. Artists created dynamic arrangements, merging the background and foreground, fragmenting shapes and combining different perspectives to create on final object. They challenged the Renaissance style and abandoned conventional perspective and Realism. The first phase was Analytical Cubism, combing views of objects at different angles, the second phase was Synthetic Cubism, where artists began to include non-art materials. *(The Art Story, 2012, d)*



(Braque, 1909)



(Braque, 1908)

Georges Braque (1882-1963) was a French artist and a co-founder of Cubism. During the war his work changed to reflect a darker tone and the horrors of that time. Braque was experimental with styles but always returned to Cubism *(GeorgesBraque, Year Unknown)*. I love his painting above as I feel like it blends German Expressionism and Cubism into one.

Jean Metzinger (1883-1956) was a French Artist and part of the French Avant-Garde movement. Metzinger wrote poetry and prose criticising traditions within art *(Art Net, Year Unknown, b)*. I prefer Metzinger's work to Picasso's, as I feel it helps me understand the point to Cubism, whereas previously it's been my least favourite art movement. I love the fragmentation of people who almost disappear into their surroundings, and I think he executes it perfectly, along with Braque both use expressive brush strokes and a fluidity within the strict fragmentation. The painting to the right is one of my favourites as I feel like it mimics a smashed mirror.

(Metzinger, 1910)



Bauhaus:



Spanning from 1919-1933, the Bauhaus movement began in Germany and originated as an art school, becoming influential to modern art all over the world. Bauhaus meaning 'Construction House'. It was heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau movements, wanting to unite creativity and manufacturing, favouring function over ornamentation. It was a reaction to anxieties of soulnessness and the loss of arts relevance. The Bauhaus movement merged theoretical ideas of the Renaissance period with modern techniques and technology. It's eventual forced closure in 1933 was due to Hitler's rise to power and the Nazi Party's strong dislike of what they considered 'Degenerate Art'. *(The Art Story, 2012, e)*

Oskar Schlemmer (1888-1943) was a German artist and appointed as Master to the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1922. Schlemmer served in the military in World War One and went on to become a choreographer, painter, sculptor, and stage designer *(Schlemmer, Year Unknown)*. I find Schlemmer's art style, in the painting to the left, unique and satisfying. The soft blend of colours and peculiarities in the figures create a calm atmosphere and yet an uncanniness. Especially once you notice the figure floating in the background. I love his choice of perspective, as if we are part of the crowd.

→ *(Schlemmer, 1932)*

(Breuer, 1936) →



Marcel Breuer (1902-1981) was a Hungarian-American designer who studied at the Bauhaus, quickly progressing to become a teacher there. Breuer was known best for his unique chair designs, still loved today, but worked in a wide range of scale, including designing buildings. He became a key figure in the emergence of Brutalism *(The Art Story, 2012, f)*. I love Breuer's chair designs, and I've seen them before without realising how influential they were or that they originated from the Bauhaus movement. I especially love that the Bauhaus style encompasses so many different mediums, including furniture design. I think Bauhaus is an interesting movement to consider in set design, as it has unique examples and takes on buildings and objects.

Impressionism:

Impressionism began in 1862 and ended in 1892, key features being short and loose brushstrokes, bright colours, juxtaposing light, and painting outdoors. Impressionists weren't interested in depicting history, religion, or mythology. They wanted to paint what they saw and felt, not focusing on perfectionism and embracing the imperfect aspects of nature. They rejected government-held exhibitions and held their own independent ones. Using layered colours to simulate light, reflection, and form. Impressionists attempted to capture the fleeting moments of nature and to be liberated from rules around composition and subject matter. *(The Art Story, 2012, g)*



Edgar Degas (1834-1917) focussed on figures and indoor scenery rather than landscapes and nature. Creating unusual perspectives and framing within his compositions. He studied the human form and movement through his obsessive studies of ballet dancers, who make up over a thousand of his paintings and sketches. (Schenkel, 2004*)*
I love the texture created through the Impressionist style of brushstrokes, the layers of colours and marks to create the skirt of the ballet dancer is incredibly effective and realistic despite not necessarily being perfect. He captures this moment in time accurately through not focussing on precision.

→ *(Degas, 1883)*

Claude Monet (1840-1926) was a French artist and a pioneer of Impressionism. He portrayed his closest friends and family, as well as locations that were important to him. Most of his famous works were created in his home and garden in France. Monet used his brushstrokes to convey texture in water and nature, as well as the vibrant life in the vivid range of colours you find outdoors *(Art Institute Chicago, Year Unknown)*. I love Monet's work, especially the more abstracted pieces, where you can only tell what he's painting by the subtle directions in the movement of his brush.

(Monet, 1867)

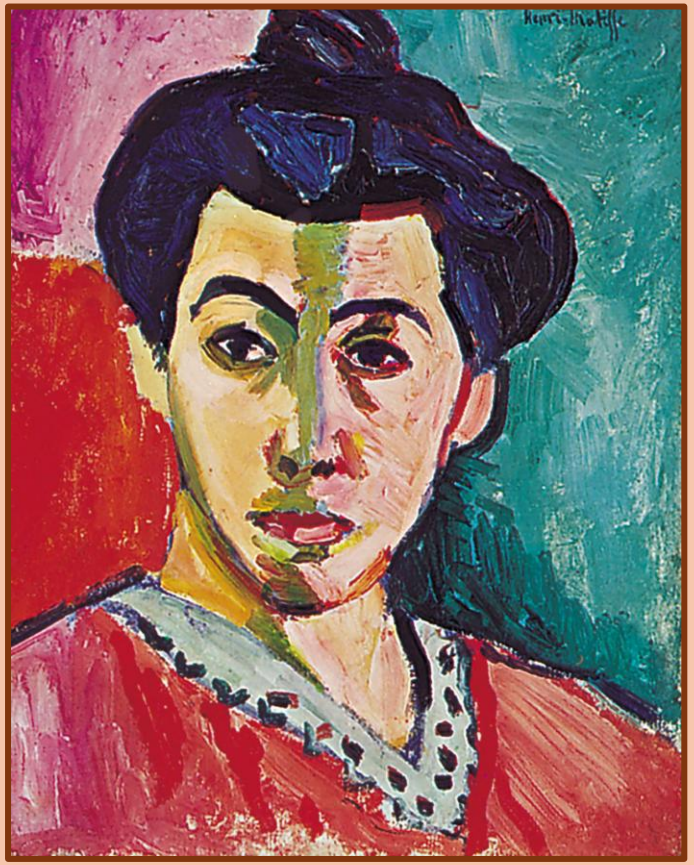


Fauvism:

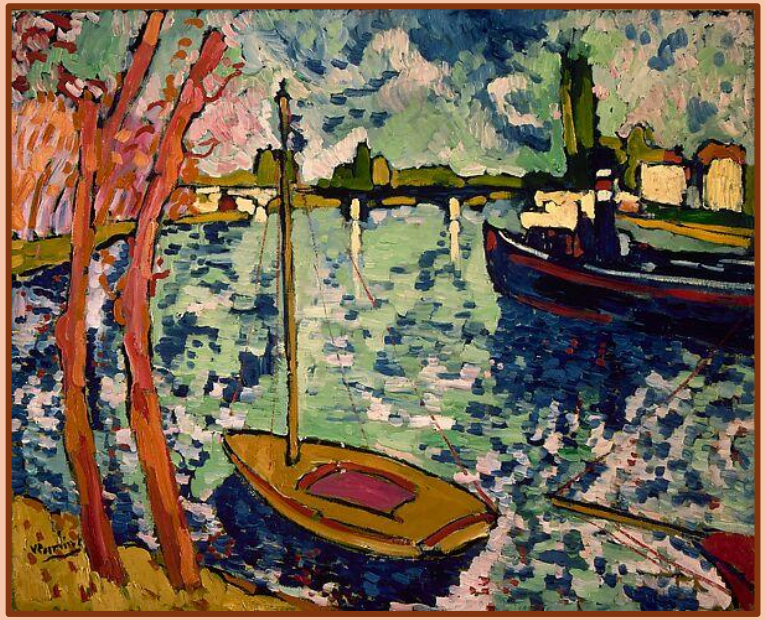
Fauvism spanned from 1899 to 1908, 'les fauves' meaning 'the wild beasts'. They were initially inspired by Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Cezanne. Les Fauves were a group of French painters whose main feature was their use of intense colours replacing realistic values. Colour didn't need to be true to the real world. Fauvism can be a vague classification but distinguished through simplified forms and saturation. *(The Art Story, 2012, h)*

Henri Matisse (1869-1954) was a French artist who explored a wide range of styles throughout his life. Most of his work post 1906 is where his style depicts flattened forms and patterns *(Tate, Year Unknown)*. Matisse has an expressive use of colour, and you can see the inspiration taken in his use of colour and mark-making from Vincent Van Gogh. I think the painting below is a great example of what they mean by unnaturalistic colours representing shadow and depth. Whilst the face is still quite flattened, the choice of the three colours across the face clearly depicts a shadow cast and a depth. I think it's really inventive and creative.

(Matisse, 1905) →



← *(Vlaminck, 1906)*



Maurice De Vlaminck (1876-1958) was a French artist as well as an orchestral violinist. Vlaminck wanted to paint with his heart and not with a specific style, this made him perfect for Fauvism. Apparently sometimes applying the paint straight from the tube onto the canvas, he achieved a wild sense of colour and perspective within his landscapes *(Art UK, Year Unknown)*. I think Vlaminck's work to the left has so much emotion within it, through the curves of the trees, it's like the landscape is falling into itself. Vlaminck demonstrates, similarly to Matisse, the choice of inaccurate colour to represent the depth in the

New Objectivity:

New Objectivity began as a reaction against expressionism, as artists became disgusted with corruption and a desire to expose the objective truth began to build up. These artists emphasised social and political turmoil through their depictions of leaders as well as labourers and saw post-war expressionism as out of touch. Combining Realism and Dadaism, with a wide range of stylistic differences, what ties them together is their motivations and usual depiction of static compositions. These artists attempted to create a tension with the person painted and the role they played in society. It was reminiscent of the techniques of old Renaissance masters. *(The Art Story, 2012, i)*



← (*Dix, 1924*)

Otto Dix (1891-1969) was a German artist who was deeply impacted by the horrors of World War One, which he fought in, and so worked to create a satirical and critical attack on warfare through his tormented subjects. Dix was eventually stopped from working as an artist by the Nazi Party *(National Galleries Scotland, Year Unknown)*. I prefer Dix's style in the art above than the one to the right, I love monochrome work (especially in ink) as there is so much aggression within the mark-making and contrasting light and dark.



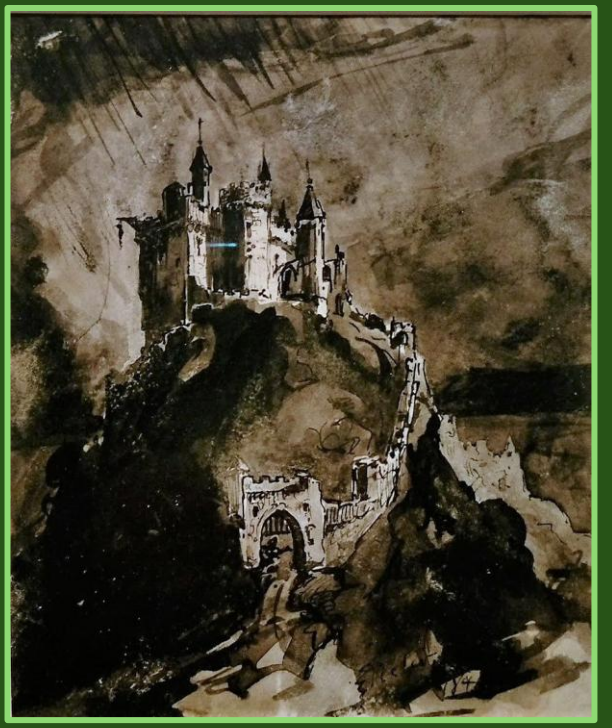
←*(Dix, 1926)*



(Schlichter, 1923)

Rudolf Schlichter (1890-1955) was a German artist who was recruited for service in World War One but went on hunger strike in protest and was allowed early release. Schlichter was also associated with Dadaism and moved towards Surrealism later on in his career. Schlichter had a desire to use art as a political weapon and so began creating illustrations for the Communist press *(Richard Nagy, Year Unknown)*. I find Schlichter's art style very Expressionist, which I find ironic as the New Objectivity movement seems so against Expressionism.

What Parts of Art History Am I Interested In? Why and How Does it Inspire Me?



(Hugo, 1847) →

My favourite art movement is usually Expressionism, specifically German Expressionism when it comes to cinema, as I love the emotion and flow within the brushstrokes and exaggerated reality created. I feel that this creates a more accurate representation of the human experience than Realism or Cubism for example. But after the last module, I've really fallen in love with Surrealism. I find the symbolism and connection to the subconscious and dream state fascinating, as well as the freedom of imagination within it.



I have never found Cubism, Realism, or Bauhaus that interesting. Mainly as I find Realism more technically impressive than emotionally impressive. Whilst I've always struggled to understand the point to Cubism and that has limited my curiosity towards it, although looking into Cubism more this year has made me reconsider this, as I can see its connections to movements I like (such as Expressionism) and think it's growing on me. To the right are two of my favourite paintings, one by Vincent Van Gogh and the other by Victor Hugo. I love the dark atmospheres created by these and, as a horror genre fan, tend to lean towards a more sinister and eery effect in the art/media I like.

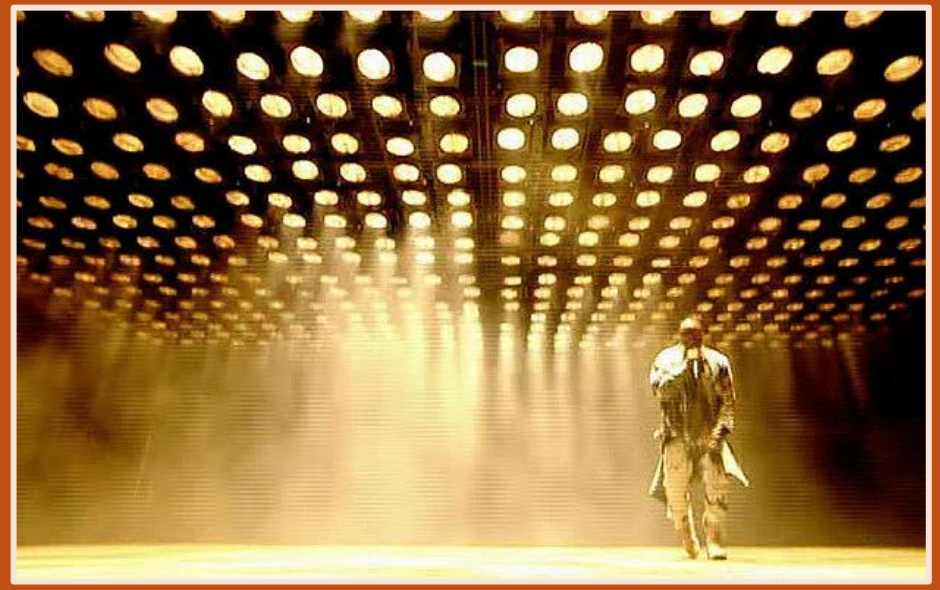
← *(Gogh, 1885)*

How Does Light Progress the Space and the Effect Created?

Kanye West's 2015 Glastonbury performance made use of rows and rows of Parcans in a square formation above him, on a rig that could be raised and lowered. This design is simple but effective, rows can be isolated to create a curtain of light, you could create a spotlight effect with one or two on directly above him, and all could be on like the image below creating a golden wash but visible beams in haze providing texture and interest to the stage. I think this is a great design because of the simplicity of it. Many concerts go overboard on effects and a wide variety of lantern types. But this design feels like it has more artistry to it and creates a specific style and atmosphere, fitting for Kanye West's solo style of performing, without dancers behind him there's no need for a massive light show.



(Dee, 2015)



←*(McCormick, 2015)*

Compared to West's set, the naked lightbulbs hanging from the ceiling at varying heights becomes more fragile and less impressive. It has a softer impact and less uniformity and control. There are limited options of what you can do with this design, although it still creates a magical and fairytale-like effect.

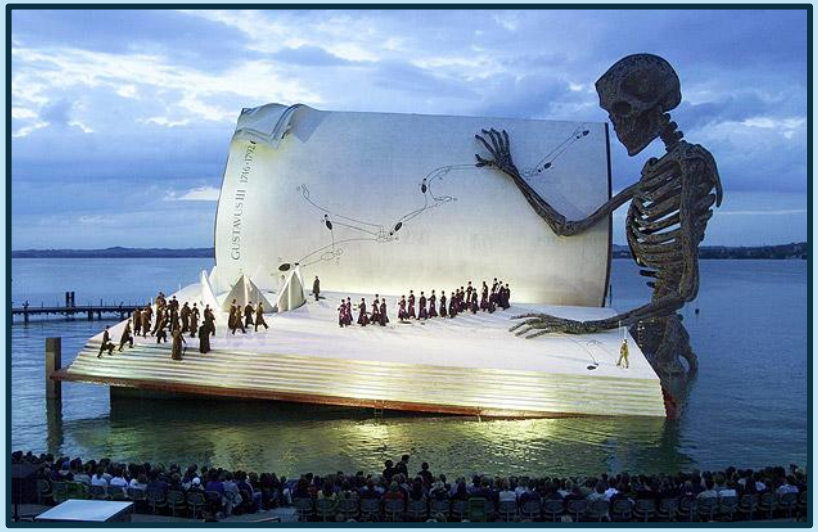
(Atkinson, 2025)



How Does Light Progress the Space and the Effect Created?

The large scale and impossibilities of the Bregenz Operatic Festival's scenic designs never fails to amaze me. The skeleton holding open a book to the right shows the genius concept of shadows becoming your backdrop. As the sun sets, you can see in the image below, the row of people become the landscape in the background through their shadow. This lighting has a creepy effect due to the looming ominous silhouette.

I have included two other examples of Bregenz sets, although not to look at the effect of their use of light, but rather the scale and composition. I love the enlarged chairs and table and think it looks incredible submerged by the water as if the house is flooding, whilst the actors appear like the next meal for the giants returning.



(Jones and McDonald, 1999)



(Atkinson, 2025)



(Fielding, 2011)

This submerged statue feels like the aftermath of the dinner scene below.



(Devlin, 2002)

How Does Light Progress the Space and the Effect Created?

The use of hanging lightbulbs in the right image creates the effect of a starry night sky, especially when combined with the blue wash on the backdrop. A blue light from above bounces off of the extremely reflective floor creating the effect of water. Whilst the contrasting colour palette and colour temperature in the lights of the house to the rest of the scene creates a warmth vs. hostility in the atmosphere and this feeling of being home at last.



(Atkinson, 2025)

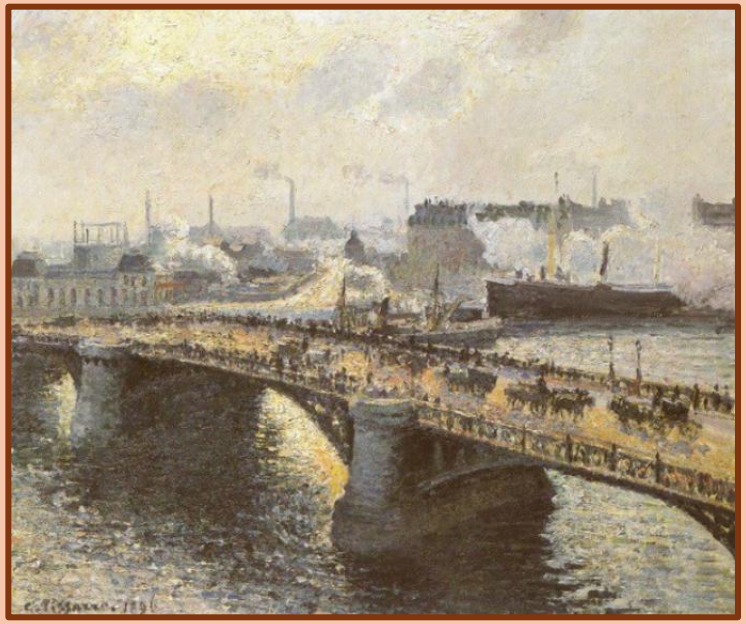


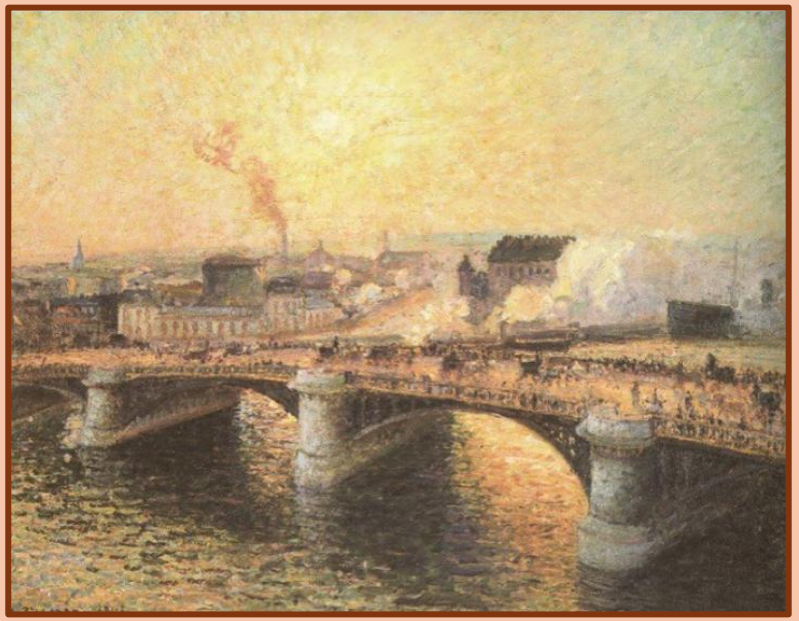
The image to the left is one of my favourite set designs yet, I love the forced perspective and giant bannisters. It feels as if we are in a child's nightmare. It has a strong feel of Surrealism and the massive clock glowing in the background mimics the moon with it's bright white casting shadows through the bannisters. The single lightbulb above creates an ominous feeling, and the lack of light overall suggests dark themes and a rising tension of something bad about to happen.

← *(Atkinson, 2025)*

How Does Light Progress the Space and the Effect Created?

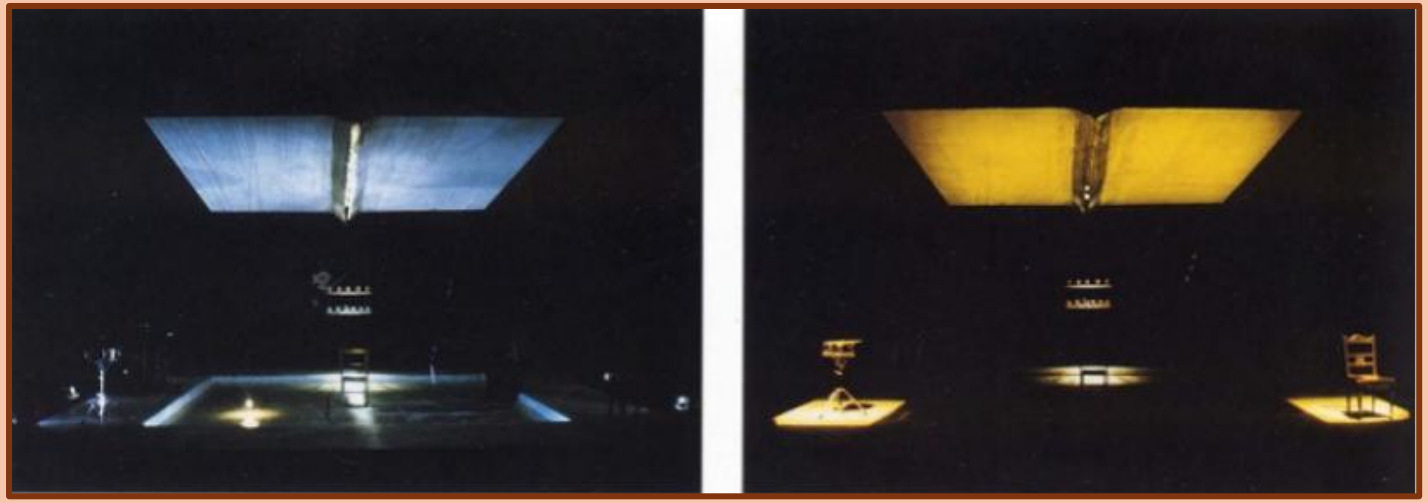
Pissarro's paintings on the right explore different times of the year and day through colour creating brighter and duller light. In Pissarro's case, the artist can successfully create atmosphere through the use of colour. Even recreating the feeling of the temperature in each image.





All images sourced from Scenography Slides (Atkinson, 2025)

The image to the right relies only on colour to create atmosphere, rather than different intensities and angles of light. It's very minimalistic and I find it barren, boring, and uninspiring. I prefer Pissarro's use of colour as he creates an impact on my senses and feelings.



Rule of Three:

The Rule of Three is a technique used to increase the focal impact. It's a division of the composition into thirds using a grid. It can be split vertically or horizontally with the focal points usually aligning with the cross sections of the grid. It creates a visually pleasing layout and naturally draw your attention to one section first. It is part of the Golden Ratio theory, a mathematical nature within art that appeals to audiences, going back to Renaissance art and Ancient Greek architecture. The division of two thirds is 0.66 whilst the Golden Ratio is 0.62 *(Raubould, Year Unknown)*.

The Rule of Thirds creates a balanced relationship between the proportions of the subject *(WhiteWall Team, Year Unknown)*.



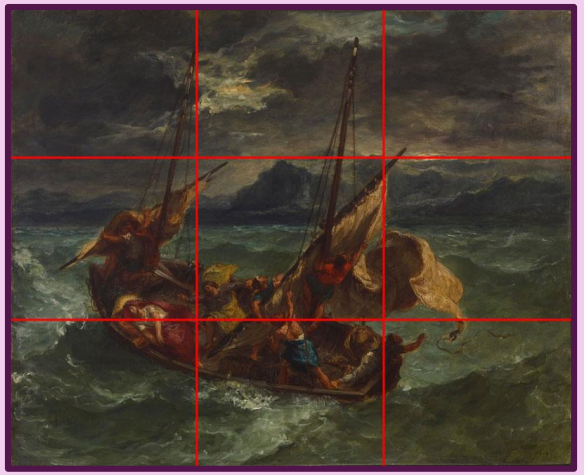
The Rule of Thirds is psychologically pleasing as it mimics how humans naturally view images and life, we are drawn to intersections rather than the centre. This technique recreates the scanning process of the eye (Dautlich, 2024). We also naturally prefer order and symmetry and find patterns and rhythms relaxing and comforting *(Perina, 2025)*. So, if dissatisfaction and discomfort are your aim, it is best to avoid the Rule of Thirds in your composition. But it can also be used to draw the audience's attention to a certain point on stage, discomfort or not. The Gestalt part of psychology is the idea that the whole is more important than the small parts that make it up. We might not understand it is the patten/symmetry we like, but we can tell when something is not right *(Medium, 2019)*.



You can see the rule of thirds used in these paintings, a film scene, and the stage design looked at previously. To the left it is arranged vertically and above it is arranged horizontally.

← *(Keane, 2018)*

(Fussel, Year Unknown) →



Whilst this painting puts the focus on all four intersections.

← *(Steward, 2023)*

I would say this set splits it vertically, but the person downstage fits into the bottom intersection

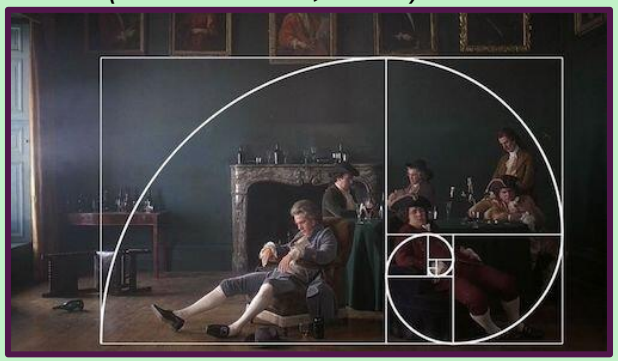
(Atkinson, 2025) →



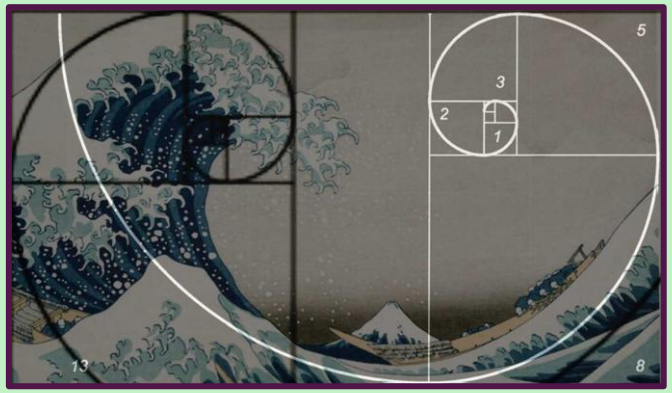
The Golden Spiral:

The Golden Spiral is where the ratio of the large side to the smaller side is the Divine Proportion (this is another term for the Golden Ratio).
When placing the focal point in the smaller side, you create a natural flow and the eye follows it round to the rest of the image, creating a spiral.
This technique is better for more flowing imagery, whilst the Rule of Thirds is better for more linear imagery *(Johnson, 2018)*.
Whilst there are many similarities between the Spiral and Thirds psychology in relation to the eye and comfort in the composition, the Golden Spiral has a connection to nature. This can be seen in the growth of plants and patterns found in nature, such as the arrangement of seeds in flowers. This creates an association to the beauty and calmness of nature and natural perfection *(Walten, 2023) and (We and the Colour, 2024)*.

(Films Fatale, 2020)



(Lesso, 2023)



(Mauney, 2023)



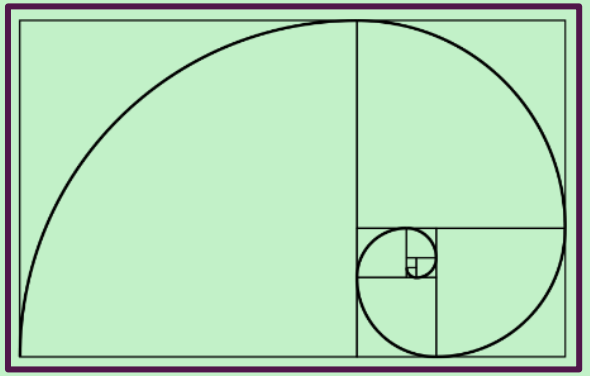
(Johnson, 2018) →

To the right is the structure and form of the spiral, this can be flipped and mirrored.



(Johnson, 2018) →

I have included paintings and film shots that demonstrate this, along with examples in nature.



(Fielding, 2011)

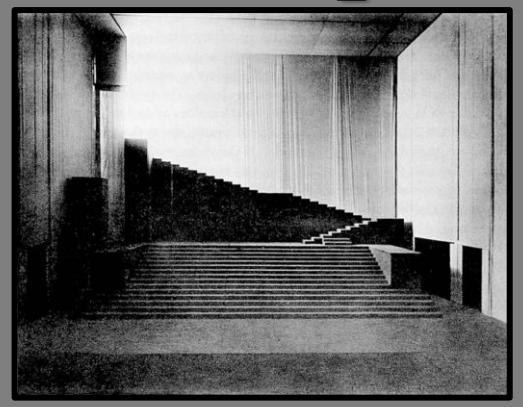
I have also found this Bregenz set demonstrates the spiral also, using height to create a flow.



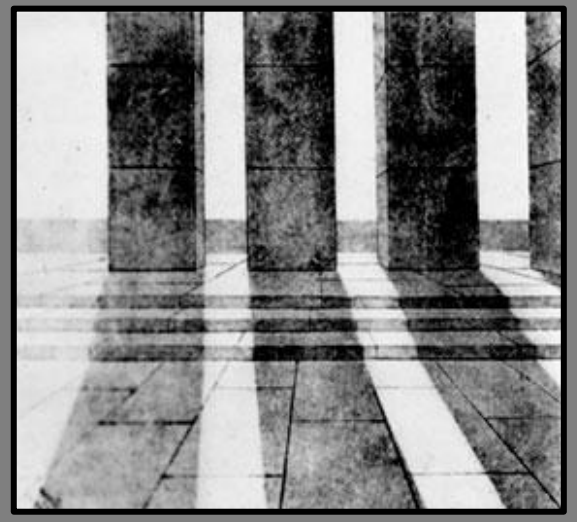
(Lesso, 2023) →



Set Designers and their use of Composition Techniques:



(HIC Architectura, 2024)



Josef Svoboda's designs avoid cliché rules, distorting the spiral pattern to confuse and intrigue the audience and to literally bend the space. It is eye catching and effective, but unique.

(Fabrizi, 2015)



(Lucarelli, 2013) ←



(Sikkens Prize, Year Unknown)

Caspar Neher's designs (bottom left) use the Golden Spiral, there is a flow through use of levels and blocking, creating a chaos yet remaining easy on the eye. A contradicting impact that works so as not to overwhelm the audience too much.

Adolphe Appia's (top left) designs make use of the Rule of Thirds, especially in the staircase. Creating an order and strictness, resulting in a hostile atmosphere. There is usually symmetry within his designs.

Creating a dramatic visual and powerful connotations of attention drawn to something not quite right.



(Universal Edition, Year Unknown)

(Alchetron, Year Unknown)

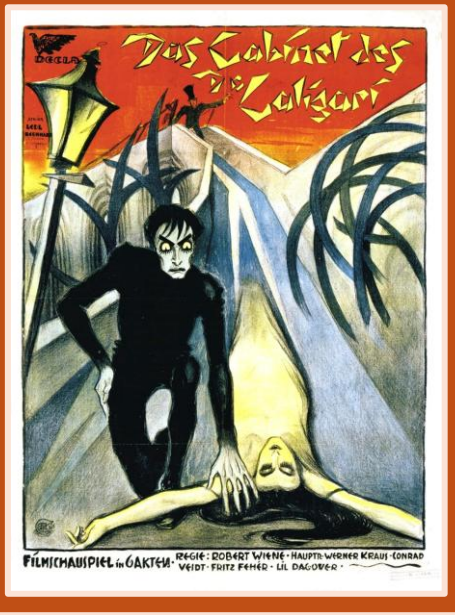


George Tsypin uses the Spiral's ratio of large to small, creating the focal point of Spiderman, beginning the flow and disrupting it with the harsh linear line. →



(Cashill, 2011)

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari:



Released in 1920, directed by Robert Wiene, written by Carly Mayer and Han Janovich, designed by Hermann Warm, Walter Reimann, and Walter Rohrig. *(IMDb, Year Unknown)*
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari had an incredible impact on the horror genre and film noir, as well as kickstarting German Expressionist film, leading to Nosferatu (1922) and Metropolis (1927). *(Dunn, 2018)*

Summary: The film follows Francis, as he attempts to solve the murder of his best friend. He believes a Somnambulist named Cesare is being manipulated by Dr. Caligari to commit these crimes, following them both. We learn with a twist ending, that Francis was insane all along.

←(Wikipedia, Year Unknown)

(Pfeiffer, 2025)



I absolutely loved this film, and I can't wait to explore more films within this genre to see how they developed it.

"Films must be drawings brought to life." – Hermann Warm



(Wikipedia, Year Unknown)

Having seen this film before, as a big fan of German Expressionism, it was great to re-watch. The sharp angles throughout the set, distorted streets, and expressive painted backdrops create the perfect atmosphere of psychological torment. Although the story was probably ground-breaking at the time of release, I was a lot more drawn to the set and performance than the narrative. I specifically love the exaggeratedly tall desks and chairs which make the actors hunch over their work as if they were a child, along with the over-expressive and melodramatic acting itself.



(KWadsworth, 2019)

German Expressionism:

German Expressionism is similar to the Expressionism Art Movement in its motivations and technique but is specific to Germany.



There were two main groups of artists in this movement, one called Die Brucke (meaning The Bridge) and the other called Der Blaue Reiter (meaning The Blue Rider). Ernst Ludwig Kirchner being a key artist in Die Brucke, and Wassily Kandinsky being a key artist in Der Blaue Reiter.
These groups emphasised their inner feelings over a depiction of reality. Working with simplified shapes and gestural marks. *(Tate, Year Unknown, a)*

← *(Kirchner, 1909-26)*



(Kandinsky, 1910-11)

Die Brucke → founded in Dresden in 1905, these artists had a radical style which rejected traditional painting methods, they focussed on depicting an emotional tension. The name pushed the idea of a bridge between artists and the rest of society, as they felt there was a disconnect that Realism had created. *(Tate, Year Unknown, b)*
Der Blaue Reiter → an informal group founded in Munich in 1911, they explored spiritual elements of art through abstraction.
I found the paintings of this movement a lot brighter and less dark in their atmospheres than I expected. I didn't realise the German Expressionist art movement came 10 years before the film movement. *(Tate, Year Unknown, c)*

German Expressionism in Film:

(Jay's Classic Movie Blog, 2022)



German Expressionism revealed a darker style than the art movement. Becoming popular in 1920, post WW1, it acted as a reaction to the horrors experienced by many during the war. The government's ban of foreign films encouraged this unique style of film to develop, isolated from the rest of the world. *(StudioBinder, 2024)*

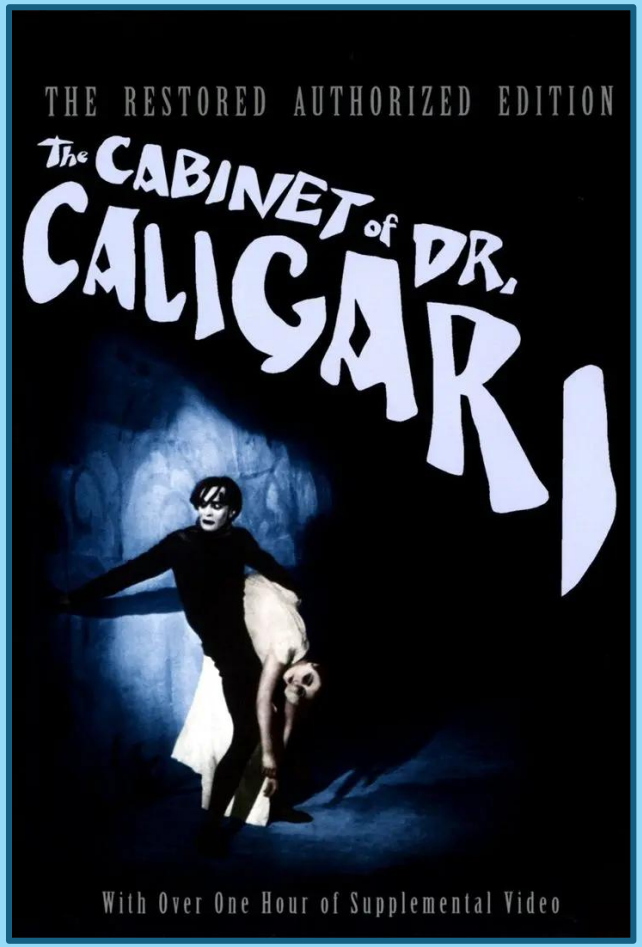
A German film critic described the movement as 'Helldunkel', describing this as meaning the German soul expressing its shadowy interiors.

The film movement depicted nightmarish imagery to communicate the country's anxieties and fears. Key features of the style were high angles, Chiaroscuro lighting, tilted camera angles, and impossible sets. Key films of this movement were The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920), Nosferatu (1922), and Metropolis (1927).

(Breznican, 2024) →



(Plex, Year Unknown)



This film movement went on to influence the genres Film Noir and Horror. I believe the horror movie Suspiria (1977), directed by Dario Argento and which I explored in the previous module, has taken a lot of influence from this movement. With its exaggerated acting style, unrealistic sets and a focus on an inner psychological state rather than realism. (*StudioBinder, 2024)*

German Expressionism in Theatre:

German Expressionism in theatre encouraged an increase in themes of psychological horror, emotional turmoil, and chaos. German Expressionist plays used symbolism and abstraction in their production elements, and acting styles became exaggerated in order to express extreme emotions and distress. *(Schott Acting Studio, Year Unknown)*

The Minsk Puppet Theatre's production of 'Notes of a Young Doctor', which I discovered in the previous module, fits into German Expressionism through its nightmarish imagery and depiction of medical procedures. As well as its inclusion of puppetry, making distorted figures and created a sinister atmosphere.

I looked into Johnny Johnson, written by Paul Green and first performed in New York in 1936, as a German Expressionist play. *(Wikipedia, 2025)*



The story follows a declaration of war in America after the President vows to never go to war again, the protagonist Johnny is devoted to peace whilst everyone around him is eager to fight. I believe the play is Expressionist in its critique of a nationalist attitude in society that rejects humane beliefs. Along with the symbolism within the Statue of Liberty coming alive to declare she is a manipulated symbol to encourage men going off to war before they die. *(Kurt Weill Foundation, Year Unknown)*



The play ends with Johnny in a mental hospital, believed mad for his peaceful views. You can see in the image to the left the use of Chiaroscuro lighting, and in the poster above the use German Expressionist art blended with Cubism.

(Williams, Year Unknown)

The Adding Machine

By Elmer Rice, 1923



Author: Elmer Rice

According to *Britannica Editors (2025)*, Elmer Rice (1892-1967) was an American playwright, director, and novelist, known for his polemical plays (meaning to criticise and give controversial opinions on a topic or person).
He lived in New York, where the Adding Machine and many other of his plays is set. He won the Pulitzer Prize for his play Street Scene (1929). A lot of his stories seem to centre around the law and court proceedings. This probably stems from his previous desire to become a lawyer.
His other works include On Trial (1914), Counsellor-at-Law (1931) and Street Scene (1929).

Rice is known for his works being associated with Melodrama and Tragedy, exploring parts of Expressionism within The Adding Machine (1923). *Simkins (2020)* states Rice's grandfather was an atheist and highly influenced his beliefs, this possibly contributed to his exploration of what happens after death and how the world came to be within the play.

(Alchetron, 2024) →



Summary:

The Adding Machine follows Mr. Zero, an average man in his forties who has worked the same bookkeeping job for 25 years. We see his strenuous marriage and his wife consistently criticise him whilst he remains mute. At his job Mr. Zero longs for a promotion and the courage to ask for one, whilst simultaneously fantasising about his wife dying so he can marry his colleague, Daisy Devore. After the shock of learning he is fired and will be replaced with an Adding Machine, Mr. Zero murders his boss and returns home without a word. After being arrested in front of his friends and his wife at a party, Mr. Zero loudly and repeatedly declares he is guilty and all of the events that led up to it. He is given the death sentence and after his wife's last visit to him, we meet The Fixer. An angelic figure with wings who takes him to his death and refuses to give him another chance. In the afterlife, Zero meets Shrdlu, a deeply religious and guilt-ridden murderer who believes he deserves to burn for eternity and can't understand why he isn't. In the Elysian Fields, Zero briefly finds peace and reunites with Daisy Devore who has taken her own life. They confess their feelings for one another and embrace, but their happiness is brief as Mr. Zero is disgusted to hear of the people he shares the Elysian Fields with and immediately leaves. We find Mr. Zero back in his old job, but still in the afterlife, this time operating the new Adding Machine. He is pulled away from his eternal work by Lieutenant Charles, who demands he returns to Earth to start a new life. Charles explains how souls are recycled and that Mr. Zero is destined to be a slave for all of his lives. Despite his objection, Mr. Zero is lured away with the idea of a woman, returning to Earth to do it all again.

Table Read – First Thoughts:

The first time we read through the play was all together in the form of a table read, I found this more difficult than reading the play alone first before the table read, as it meant I was trying to both experience the story and writing as well as listen to what was going on around me. I think I would prefer to read it alone first next time.
I found the play quite difficult as there's many long monologues, especially in the first scene where it is only Mrs. Zero's monologue, and the fourth scene where it is only Mr. Zero's monologue. I began to enjoy the play a lot more once it took a more 'supernatural' and expressive route, though Mr. Zero's journey in the afterlife. I was also very surprised by the twist of Mr. Zero murdering his boss as it was very unexpected in a positive way. The content of the play was not what I thought it would be at all, and although it's not my favourite play that we've studied, I was happily surprised.

Initial Discussions as a Group:

- Zero – do we feel sympathy?

I find it difficult to sympathise with him when he doesn't seem to feel any real emotion towards anything happening. He doesn't take accountability properly, he admits to what he's done but doesn't fully understand it. What does he even care about? He doesn't seem to care about Daisy or his wife, if anything he only really cares to work.

- The play is very existential and random/unpredictable, I didn't know where it was going

Scene One Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene One: Introduction to Mr. and Mrs. Zero

The opening scene consists of only Mrs. Zero talking, throughout the play we see how little Mr. Zero speaks around his wife, almost becoming mute with her. We follow her thought process as she complains about the movies she doesn't like and the movies she does like, transitioning into insulting her husband. Mrs. Zero describes how disappointed she is in him and how he's turned out, claiming she slaves away at home to look after him, whilst he does nothing but sit and count whilst at work and then sit and stare whilst at home.

(Senensky, 2020)
→



My Thoughts:

When first reading this scene, I found it quite boring and dull, but after a few more reads I think I understand that that's the point of the scene. Our introduction to the play is a monotonous and difficult to listen to rant from a woman who hates her husband. Mr. Zero's lack of speech in the first scene, despite him being the main character, sets us up for how passive a character he is and how little control he has or takes over his own life.

Scene Two Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene Two: Mr. Zero's Workplace

The second scene introduces us to Zero's personality and his own thought process, as ugly as that is. Alongside Daisy Devore's character. We learn Mr. Zero wishes his wife was dead and considers whether Daisy would be a better wife than the one he has. He goes on a rollercoaster of thought, between hating Daisy and wanting her, all the while playing a scenario in his head of having the guts to ask for a promotion from his boss. Meanwhile, we learn Daisy is suicidal and unhappy with her life, she longs for romance, specifically from Mr. Zero, she also fantasises also about marrying him once his wife is dead. The scene ends on an intense cliffhanger, as Mr. Zero loses his job and is replaced with a machine. The stage directions create a vision of spinning and a slow-motion mental breakdown.



(Senensky, 2020)
→

My Thoughts:

Although I immediately disliked Mr. Zero, due to his thought process consisting of hating his wife and Daisy and reducing them to the purpose of marriage. I found it interesting to see the contrast between his fantasy and reality. It made me consider whether he genuinely feels he can be as charismatic and confident as he imagines and is just delusional, or if he is incredibly insecure and desires what he can never have. After reading the entire play, this scene makes you feel like he has no control over what he can be like, as he is destined to be a slave for whoever he works for, and so no matter how badly he wants it, a higher power ensures he never will get it. I love the dynamic and rhythm of Zero and Daisy's inner monologues, entwined with their conversation. I feel like it has a great pace and works well for the methodical way they are counting and writing.

Scene Three Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene Three: The Party

This scene revolved around a party that Mr. and Mrs. Zero are hosting for their friends. We meet couples One through Six and witness the monotony and conformity within the whole of society. With all the men dressing and acting the same as each other and the women dressing and acting the same as each other- both groups also hold the same opinions and interests. The end of this scene reveals the bombshell surprise of Mr. Zero murdering his boss, he calmly accepts his fate and willingly (almost happily) goes with the police officer. Whilst his friends watch with pure curiosity and the desire to gossip, no affection or concern is displayed between anyone.



(Senensky, 2020)
→

My Thoughts:

I thought this was a great way to expand on the mundanity of their world and the extent to which people conform, it is almost dystopian and quite creepy how everyone lives the exact same life. And whilst Mr. Zero strays from this and disrupts it quite dramatically, he doesn't express any bold opinions or have a different personality- his main difference is his quietness and disinterest. After reading the rest of the play, I believe the only genuine care and affection exhibited throughout is Daisy's love for Zero and Shrdlu's love for his mother. I was really surprised by the end of this scene and felt it was very unpredictable, it made me more interested in the play. Before the reveal, I wasn't really enjoying the play, but this definitely intrigued me.

Scene Four Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene Four: The Trial

This scene consists of Mr. Zero's trial, mainly his confession to the court and the decision that he is guilty. We see Zero slowly lose his mind, as he can't stop counting. He rants about what led up to his crime and how he has no desire to deny what he's done. He goes off on tangents about his feelings towards his wife and Daisy and even expresses desires to have shot a black man who stepped on his foot once. We also learn a bit more about what happened with the woman he got sent to the workhouse for 6 months.



(Senensky, 2020)

→

My Thoughts:

This is the most Zero speaks throughout the whole play, and most of his thoughts are just recycled from what we've heard before. His opinions are limited, and his life revolves around his unhappiness and hatred of everyone around him. I think it's interesting how accepting he is of the crime he's committed but believes it's not right for him to be sentenced guilty. He contradicts himself in a way that confuses his character, as I'm not sure whether he believes he is just exempt from the rules, or whether he wholeheartedly feels it was the right thing to do. I really liked the concept/metaphor of his friends being the jury, communicating how he will be judged by his peers more than the world, and how they are the deciders of his reputation and legacy.

Scene Five Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene Five: The Cage

The scene begins with a tour guide showing a group of people around a prison. He talks about Mr. Zero in his cage as if he wasn't able to hear them. The guide talks about the crime as if it's one of the wonders of the world and advertises booklets for people to purchase. Mrs. Zero makes her final appearance to say goodbye, and after a brief moment of sweetness between them, she storms out angry at him once more. Mr. Zero is then met with The Fixer (possibly an angel) who tells him it's his time to die. Mr. Zero becomes emotional, in the same way he was in court, and determinedly tries to get another chance at life. He is taken to be executed.



(Senensky, 2020)
→

My Thoughts:

I find the beginning of the scene quite comedic and I feel like the author is commenting on the way people profit from other's tragedies. Similarly to the way people make movies and TV shows about serial killers nowadays, dramatising and glorifying horrible things that happened to real life people. Rice could be making a statement on how out-of-touch people can be when it comes to tragedy. Mr. Zero once again shows no emotion or interest in his wife but suddenly gains the ability to show emotion when faced with his death (like at the end of the court scene). Zero is selfish and only cares about his self-preservation. Although he can't find a reason to live or to enjoy his life

Scene Six Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene Six: The Graveyard

We are in a graveyard and meet Judy, the woman Zero got sent to the workhouse. We learn the complete story of Zero's 'crime', sending her there merely because he perversely liked to watch her get dressed and was scared when his wife found out. Zero's selfishness develops and his bad character openly reveals itself. We meet the ghost of Zero and his introduction to being dead, alongside Shrdlu, the man who murdered his mother and is determined to suffer for his crime. Shrdlu shows the amount of guilt you would think Zero should feel.



(Senensky, 2020)
→

My Thoughts:

I feel a lot of sympathy towards Shrdlu, as his crime seems more accidental and his consciousness is full of the shame and sorrow of what he has done. He wholeheartedly believes he is an evil person and should face the consequences. I have no sympathy for Zero, he has only bad intentions and nothing likeable about him.

Scene Seven Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene Seven: The Elysian Fields

We are now in paradise, a place of eternal music and sunshine and nature. Shrdlu and Zero relax here, Shrdlu expresses his sadness in the fact he can't find his mother and make amends to her- we learn Shrdlu must stay in the fields until he understands. Daisy makes another appearance here, after taking her life. We learn she killed herself once Zero was dead, as her feelings for him were the only thing tying her to the real world. They discuss their feelings for one another and dance and kiss. Shrdlu describes the people living here and what they do all day. Zero is disgusted and demands to leave- Daisy goes to follow him but we never see her again.



(Senensky, 2020)

→

My Thoughts:

I think the Elysian Fields are an interesting space and that there's a lot to unpack from them. Especially around the music that some people can't hear, and the fact Shrdlu can only leave once he understands something unknown to the characters and the audience. I find Zero's attitude to Daisy quite disgusting and disappointing, as he leads her on and then drops her so easily. Which is probably exactly what he would have done in the real world if his wife had ever died. Zero shows a surprising amount of care towards the idea of living with people who like to do art and relax and write and listen to music. Perhaps he doesn't have the ability to understand a world in which you have no one to serve and no work to do, as he is programmed like a machine to constantly serve someone else and obey their orders.

Scene Eight Breakdown and My Thoughts:

Scene Eight: Reincarnation

Zero is glued to an adding machine, working for another 25 years. Pulled away from this by Lieutenant Charles, we learn he is to be reincarnated and return to live another life on Earth. Zero is confused and doesn't want to leave this place, as he would rather go on working eternally on this machine. He learns his destiny and his past lives and the structure of the recycling of souls, the more he hears the more he refuses to return. But in the end, he is lured away, quite easily, by the idea of a beautiful woman who will go with him. It is etched into his character to both be a slave as well as easily swayed by anyone he finds attractive.



(Senensky, 2020)
→

My Thoughts:

I like this ending, and I think it's extremely fitting to the story and the perfect way to say this will happen over and over for the rest of time. I think Charles goes on too long, as he begins to explain how the Earth and life began, which I felt was unnecessary to the story, but I like his character and the idea that there are people like Charles and the Fixer who run the world and clean the souls ready to be reused.

Second and Third Read Through:

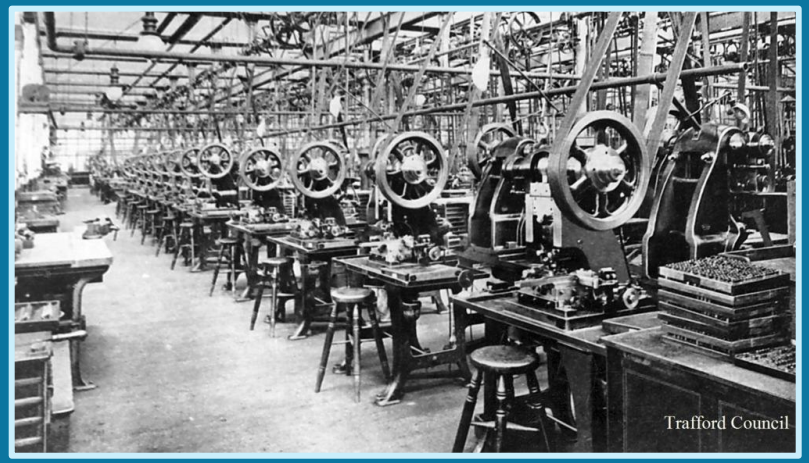
Meanings of aspects I didn't understand:

Shrdlu → the phrase 'SHRDLU' was produced on a linotype machine by running your fingers down the left keys, used to mark an error, although sometimes accidentally printed. *(Dictionary, Year Unknown)*
Linotype machines were invented by Ottmar Mergenthaler in 1884, sold by the Mergenthaler Company of New York for commercial printing. This machine is like the language version of an Adding machine. *(Exploring Trafford's Heritage, Year Unknown)*

Elysian Fields → an eternal paradise in Ancient Greek mythology, for heroes and those who lived righteous lives only. *(Merriam-Webster, Year Unknown)*



(Exploring Trafford's Heritage, Year Unknown)



(Exploring Trafford's Heritage, Year Unknown)

'Life of Riley' → a phrase meaning an easy and pleasant life, coming into use in WW1. First printed citation in the New Jersey Newspaper '*The News*' in 1910. Originated from Willy Reilly from Sligo, Ireland. Many Irish people immigrated to New York at this time, looking for a better life, or even looking for the 'life of Riley'. *(Phrase Finder, Year Unknown)*

I decided to do a second read through of the play alone, and then a third read through with a friend. The second read through really helped me gain an understanding into the stage directions, as in the first read I wasn't even aware that the room was spinning at the end of Scene 2. This as a result really helped me see the Expressionism within the play and how sound is used to represent Mr. Zero's inner turmoil. Whilst the third read through re-established details in what certain characters discussed, which I could go through and research to further my understanding of the Elysian Fields and other smaller references, such as the ones seen to the left.

Character List and Name Meanings:

Zero → the main character, average man. 'Zero' has Arabic origins *(Mullen, 2024)*. A famous New York actor was called Zero Mostel *(IMDb, Year Unknown)*, although he was the wrong time period for this play, it is an interesting correlation.

Mrs. Zero → Mr. Zero's wife, unhappy marriage and unattached, housewife. The name Zero suggests they have no value and are insignificant, the bottom of the chain.

Daisy Diana Dorothea Devore → Mr. Zero's colleague and love interest, commits suicide. Daisy comes from old English 'Day's Eye', referencing the daily routine of a daisy opening and closing its petals *(Merriam-Webster, Year Unknown)*. Zero compares her to the flower, she wears a white dress correlating to the white petals. Daisies are associated with innocence, beauty, sweetness and hold connotations of peaceful nature. Diana comes from an Ancient Roman Deity, meaning beauty and fleetness *(The Bump, 2024)*, Daisy is gone from Zero's life fleetingly. Dorothea means Gift of God with Greek origins *(The Bump, 2024)*, a heavenly paradise connecting to the Elysian Fields. Devore has French origins and means 'from Vore' *(Wisdom Library, Year Unknown)*, possibly French heritage.

Judy O'Grady → The woman Mr. Zero gets sent to prison after watching her change. Latin roots of Judaeus *(Ancestry, Year Unknown)*, significance in religious contexts, ironic name due to her criminal history and sexual promiscuity? Judy O'Grady was also possibly a 1920s comedy. *(Chisholm Larsson, Year Unknown)*

Mr. and Mrs. One through Six → Mr. and Mrs. Zero's friends. Boring and conforming, they are unoriginal copies of each other and are uninteresting, nothing special.

Shrdlu → a murderer Zero meets in the afterlife, wrecked with guilt. Linotype machine technique used to signify an error and a necessity to reset, sometimes printed by accident. Maybe to symbolise the error he's made and desire to reset himself.



(Chisholm Larsson, Year Unknown)

Lieutenant Charles → Sends Zero back to Earth to be reincarnated, cleaner of souls. Lieutenant Charles Campbell Wood of the R.A.F. saved a woman drowning in the Thames in 1919, unfortunately dying from his injuries *(London Remembers, Year Unknown)*, a possible connection between the two suggesting a pure goodness in his soul and a care for others.

The Boss/The Fixer/The Guide/The Guard → All reduced to their job titles. They are similar to Zero in the way they are eternally tied to their profession. **The Fixer** doesn't clean or repair souls like the Lieutenant, his name suggests he is fixing the world by ridding it of cruel and wicked people.

Character Analysis: Mr. Zero

Mr. Zero's physical descriptions:

He is thin, sallow, undersized, and partially bald (*The Adding Machine*, 1923, p. 3). Zero is 45 years old and sees his main attraction as being a 'steady meal ticket' despite not earning much (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 10). When dead he wears a full-dress suit of very antiquated cut.

Mr. Zero's home life and career:

Mr. Zero is married to Mrs. Zero, she describes him as a 'Bookkeeper' *(The Adding Machine*, 1923, p. 5), but he could also be considered an accountant. He has worked at the same department store in the same role for 25 years. They do not have any children and Zero appears to not help around the house or speak much to his wife, suggesting an unhappy marriage. They live in New York, but he expresses a desire to get a house in New Jersey if he ever got rich.

Mr. Zero's relationship with women:

He hates women and says he is sick of them (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 7). He also has a perverted nature, shown through how he gets caught watching Judy change through the window and then getting her sent to prison for 6 months to get away with it. He expresses wanting to leave his wife and marry Daisy, fantasising about his wife dying. He claims to love Daisy in the Elysian Fields but leaves her quite easily due to apparently not wanting to be around bums. Mr. Zero can only briefly hear the music in the Fields when dancing with Daisy, suggesting in that brief moment he has an opportunity to change.

Mr. Zero's Crime:

He murders his boss and only feels bad for the children. He is a coward who's scared of his boss and is unambitious, with no backbone to defend himself he resorts to murder. Losing his mind after the murder, he can't stop adding numbers. Zero wants a scrapbook made of his newspaper clippings and wants Daisy to have it not his family, a desire to be more than he was but not the courage to do it in life rather than death. Mr. Zero requests only ham and eggs for his last meal, implying no personality or adventure. Along with this, a 'ham and egger' is a worthless person who is undesirable *(Wiktionary, 2024) and (English Language Usage, 2016)*, as well as being a 1920s American phrase for something that is difficult to separate and usually found together *(Wikipedia, 2025)* (could be the relationship between Zero and his own fate in each reincarnation).

Mr. Zero is racist and fantasises about committing hate crimes and killing a black man. (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 24)

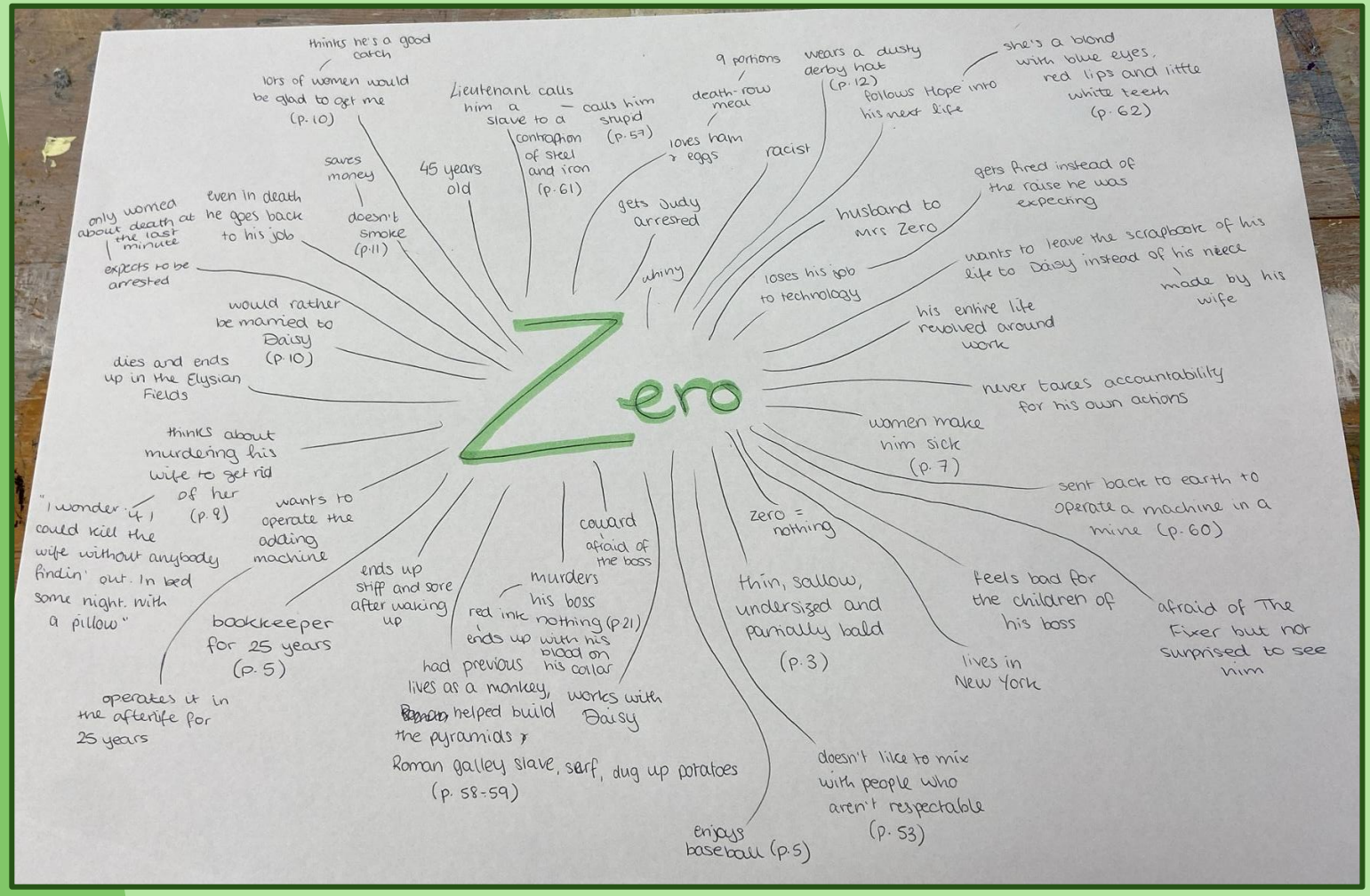
(The Adding Machine, 1969)
→



Character Analysis: Mr. Zero

Mr. Zero's relationship with technology and his reincarnation:

Replaced with a machine, in the afterlife he works for 25 years on the machine that replaced him. He has to be physically pulled away from it as if it's absorbed him (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 55). In his next life he will operate a super-hyper-adding machine, he is tied to technology and is described by the Lieutenant as a 'slave to a contraption of steel and iron' (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 61). Mr. Zero gets worse with each reincarnation, he can never be healed. He has always been a slave, was first a monkey, then helped build the pyramids, then a Roman galley slave, and then a serf (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 58 and 59). He doesn't want to be reincarnated but begs to stay and work in death, it is unclear what he wants- stability? Eventually lured back to life with the idea of a woman who's conventionally attractive, displaying how he will never change and there is no hope or point to his existence.



Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.

Character Analysis: Mrs. Zero

Appearance:

Mrs. Zero is 45, sharp featured with grey streaks in her hair (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 3). Described as shapeless in her nightgown with un-gartered stockings sagging over her shoes. In Scene 5 she is dressed in mourning clothes when visiting Zero, with a heavy veil that gives her a headache. She spent $64.25 on the clothes → it is suggested she is not being sensible with her money and will run out soon

Her relationship with Mr. Zero:

Mrs. Zero thinks Zero is a failure and she is disappointed in who she married. She draws the line at cheating and caught onto him watching Judy through the window. She is upset that Zero is late for dinner but not surprised (maybe she enjoys when he messes up so that she can complain). She then demands he helps her clean up showing her dominance in the relationship, controversial to stereotypes of the time. In Scene 5 she becomes suspicious of him and Daisy. Mrs. Zero brings Zero ham and eggs for his last meal, she knows him well and cries whilst making it but is not sad when she says goodbye → she doesn't say goodbye. Makes the scrapbook for him and wants to pass it down as an old family heirloom. Doesn't want to remarry, "once is enough for me" (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 29), this feels more like exhaustion than love. She feels lonely without him due to the lack of someone to talk to rather than specifically his company. Seems apologetic but nostalgic over their arguments and ends their time together with a fight as she storms out on him for the last time.

Personality and Interests:

The wife of Mr. Zero, she talks a lot. She is doing her hair in Scene 1. Mrs. Zero hates western movies and loves romance movies, discussing shows for a long time (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 6). Claims to be slaving away all day with nothing to show for it, she is a housewife who does the chores, cooking, and cleaning. She likes hosting and socialising as well as gossiping with her friends. In the past she caught pneumonia and nearly died but recovers, with a large medical bill. She has no children and never mentions them, it is likely she has no interest or regrets. She has two sisters and a niece.

Movies/Plays she references:

'For Love's Sweet Sake' (1909) a man acts as a coachman to trick his sister and accidentally meets the woman he falls in love with. *(IMDb, Year Unknown)*

Seasick (a Delano comedy), I couldn't find anything on it, maybe lost to time, but there are two silent film comedy sequences to do with the sea, one in 1919 with Charlie Chaplin and the other in 1921 with Buster Keaton. *(Shutterstock, 2023)*

'A Mother's Tears' Grace Darling was a Victorian hero, not an actress, who grew up in a lighthouse and saved the survivors of a shipwreck with her father during a violent storm. One of those survivors was a reportedly a mother who had to leave her children behind. *(Mike@bitaboutbritain, 2024)*

Couldn't find anything on 'The Price of Virtue'.

'Pictureland' was a possible gossip magazine on the latest film and theatre actors.

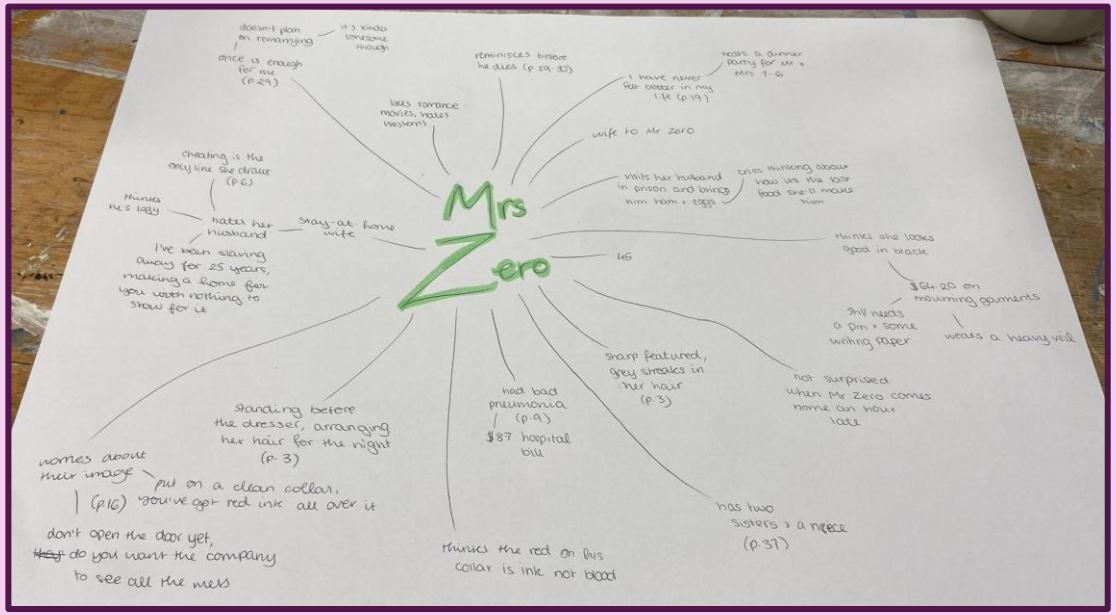
Character Analysis: Mrs. Zero

Pneumonia in the 1920s:
In the 1920s antibiotics came into common use when treating pneumonia, such as penicillin. This was incredibly effective. *(Borton, 2020)*
The survival rate of Pneumonia was low in the early 20th century *(Brandage and Shanks, 2008)*, Mrs. Zero would have been very likely to die, especially as they wouldn't have been able to afford the treatment → Does Mr. Zero resent Mrs. Zero for the medical bill? Or did he see this as his way out of an unhappy marriage?



(Gershan, 2016) →

Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.



Housewives:
Despite new technology, electricity, running water, gas, and ready-made clothes, the workload didn't decrease for housewives, only allowing them to get stuff done without extra paying cleaners and maids. Home economics in 1899 became commonly taught in schools, meaning it was taken more seriously. This change in attitude convinced women that the home was the root of society and can elevate the man of the house, despite it really being a burden in disguise. Due to cramped conditions, there could be no privacy and no storage (connecting to how Mr. Zero was able to watch Judy). Many working-class housewives had to find work to help contribute to the house at the same time as their chores. Society would guilt trip women on how the family was presented through their home and clothes and manner. Does Mrs. Zero not have children to save on money and workload? *(Her Half of History, 2022)*

Character Analysis: Mr. and Mrs. One through Six

The Women:

Women are all dressed the same, but their dresses are different colours (perhaps matching with their husbands' wigs). The women verbally greet each other and munch on chocolate whilst the men smoke. They then discuss dresses, movies, and gossip about people they know, including divorces and possible affairs.

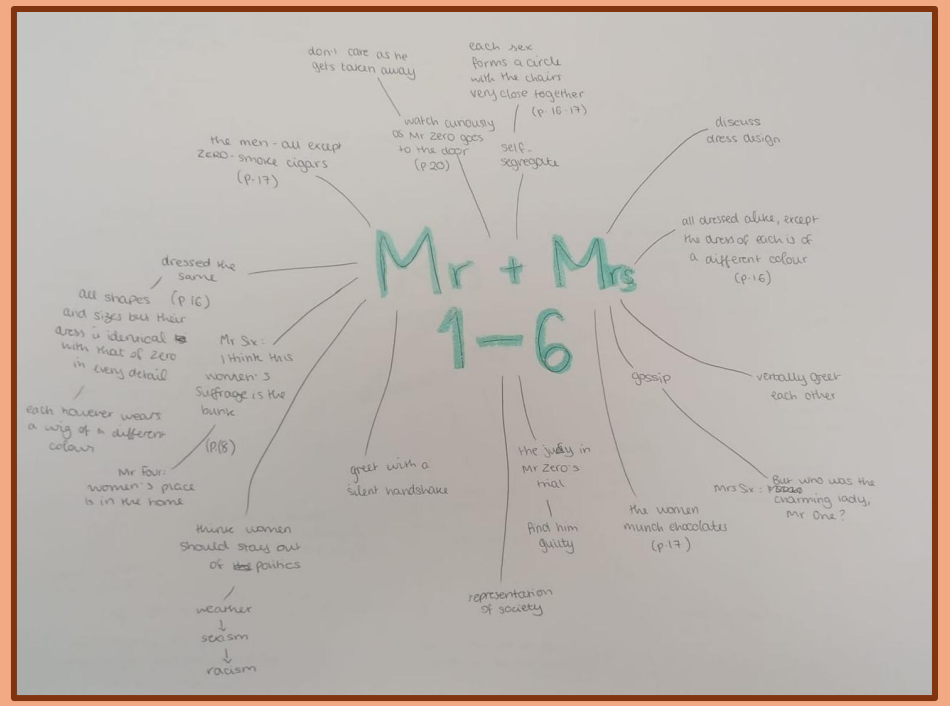
The Collective:

They enter the room in two columns, which is uncanny and creepy (conformist). Keeping separate at first, with men on the right and women on the left in two circles made with chairs, before joining in one big circle. They all watch curiously as Zero goes to open the door and all point in unison when asked who Mr. Zero is. They then murmur with surprise and excitement when he is arrested, as now there's more to gossip about. They then act as the jury in the Scene 4. This feels metaphorical for how their friends will judge them and decide their reputation in society.

The Men:

The men are all shapes and sizes, dressed exactly like Mr. Zero but with different coloured wigs on to distinguish them (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 16). The men silently greet each other and smoke cigars (except Zero). They then discuss rain, how women should stay out of politics, and move into a racist rant on "America for Americans" (*The Adding* Machine, 1923, p.19). All the men agree a woman's place is in the house and that women's suffrage is the 'bunk' (rubbish/nonsense) (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 18)

Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.



Character Analysis: Mr. and Mrs. One through Six



(Behlen, 2022)

Gender Roles in the 1920s



(Schneider, 2021)

Women in the 1920s:

Women's lives were advertised as being better than they really were. With women now entering the workplace more, there was a huge pay gap between men and women and employers didn't want women in management positions, with financial independence only an option for urban women.

In the 1920s women were given the right to vote, but the idea of women being only for the home was still being pushed in society. Old rules for women were questioned, such as their appearance and etiquette when out in public, but old values persevered in rural areas. Daisy talks about appearing refined and that limiting what she does in her day to day and how she wants to be perceived.

Once the right to vote was won, suffrage groups began to break down into smaller groups and retreat from the forefront of people's minds. *(BBC Bitesize, Year Unknown)*

Men in the 1920s:

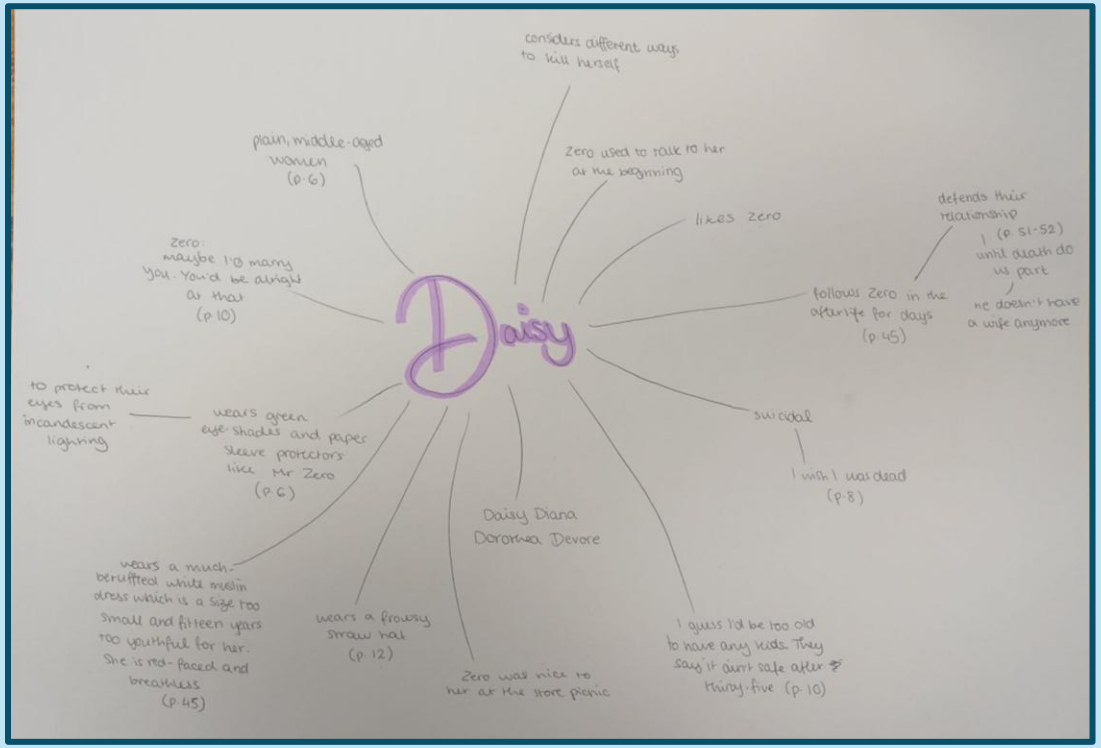
According to *IPL (Year Unknown)*, Men were considered the authoritative figure in the household, irony being in the fact Mr. Zero is so meek and quiet. They were pressured into working long and hard to support their families, harder for the working classes as they couldn't afford for the women not to work. Men were not present in the family emotionally, only financially.

There were no social limitations for men like there were for women, they were not shamed for misbehaving and causing a scene in public, let alone for wearing something different.

Those involved in World War One would have had trouble readjusting when they returned home, same facing the horrors of PTSD. It is presumed that Mr. Zero did not fight in the war as he talks about having worked in the same place for 25 years straight, was this due to his age? Or did he have no desire?

Character Analysis: Daisy Diana Dorothea Devore

Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.



Appearance:

Alliterative name → quadruple alliteration. Daisy is a plain middle-aged woman. At work she wears green eye shades and paper sleeve protectors, eye shades were worn to protect their eyes from the incandescent lighting. In the afterlife Daisy wears a much-beruffled white muslin dress, a size too small and 15 years too youthful. She considers herself too old for children, roughly being around 35.

Career, Mental Health, and relationship with Mr. Zero:

At work Daisy reads the figures and Mr. Zero enters them. She is critiqued by him for reading too fast and then too slow (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 6 and 7). Daisy is extremely suicidal, constantly considering different methods of suicide (*The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 8). She considers gas, poison, mercury, and shooting herself. At work she also fantasises about movie kisses and experiencing them in real life. She longs for Mr. Zero and imagines kissing him and states she wants to marry him if his wife dies. Daisy eventually kills herself after she loses her job and Mr. Zero is executed. Daisy daydreams and talks about the special moment they shared at a work picnic.

Afterlife:

Daisy follows Zero for days in the afterlife trying to catch up to him. When she does, they sit under a tree and reminisce over their picnic. She confesses her feelings and gets her movie kiss. Daisy wants to stay in the Elysian Fields forever with Mr. Zero and marry him there. She is reluctant to dance but doesn't want to stop once they start, and she can still hear the music when Zero isn't able to. She follows Zero out of the fields, but we never see her again after that → claims she might as well be alive if she can't be with him in the afterlife.

Women's Rights and Women in the Workplace:

Women's Right:

In 1903 there was the Women's Trade Union League in New York, with middle and working-class women dedicated to women's suffrage

1910 → the first suffrage parade in New York City

1911 → upper class women and religious people form a group against women's suffrage

1915 → New York City suffrage parade wearing white, Daisy wears white in the Elysian Fields

1917 → New York women gain suffrage

1918 → President Woodrow Wilson discusses adopting women's suffrage after the war is over

1920 → women win the right to vote

(*Crusade for the Vote, Year Unknown*)



← (*Gidlow, Year Unknown*)



(Britannica Editors, 2025)

Working Women:

The marriage bar, preventing married women from working, was lifted after the war.

Women employed in male roles due to loss of men as they went to war

The end of the war left mixed feelings as some women wanted to quit and return to normality, whilst others enjoyed the change and wanted to continue working.

(Espin, 2019)

Mental Health in the 1920s

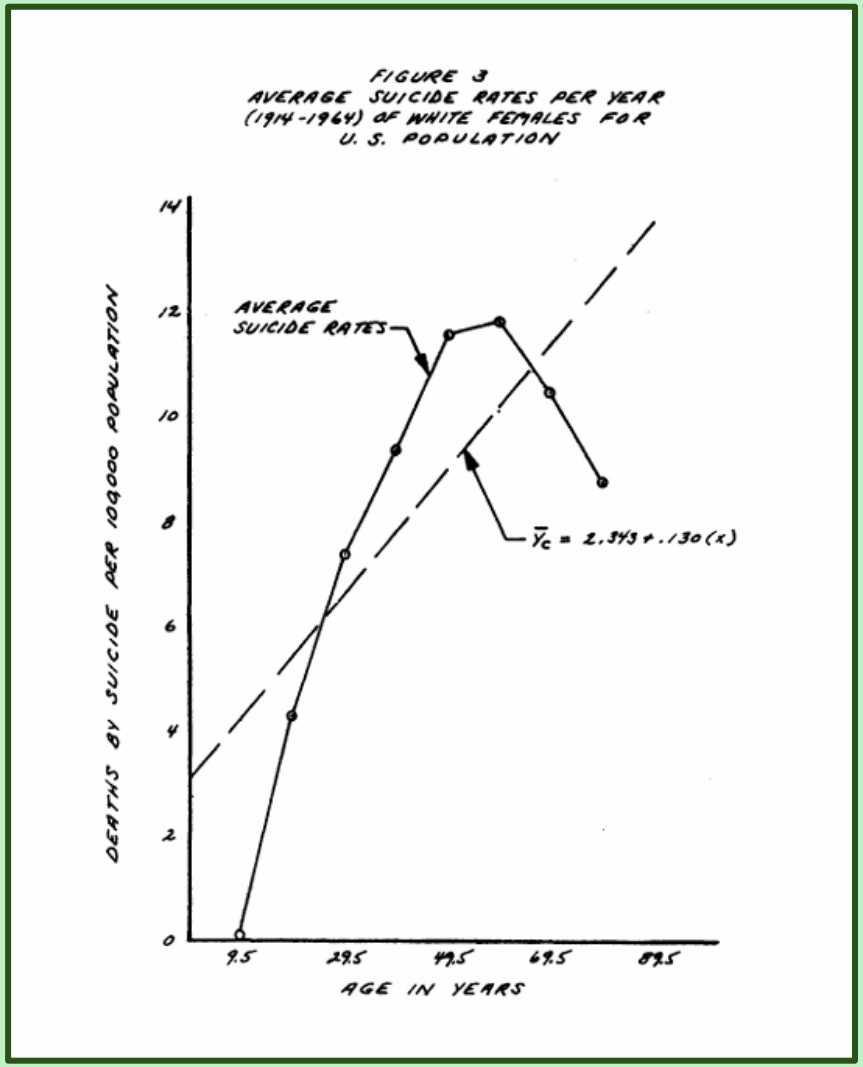
(Gagen, 2019)



Suicide rates in white females between 1914 and 1964 were the highest and consistently increasing in women aged up to 45. After which they decreased, suggesting once the pressures of society were taken off of them, they lived much happier lives. *(Walker, Year Unknown)*

Between 1830 and 1870 there was the theory of Psychiatric Victorianism, where women were considered more vulnerable to insanity than men due to the 'instability of their reproductive organs'. Suggesting a connection between uterus and brain. This removed their ability to attain power or leadership and reinforced the idea of men being stronger. Between 1870 and 1920 there was the theory of Psychiatric Darwinism, which labelled women as passive, placid, and nurturing; whilst men were labelled as competitive and aggressive. Any deviation from this stereotype of women was deemed related to a mental illness and could be used against any woman seeking independence, power, control, or respect. *(Cowan, 2013)*

Hysteria, an illness created to suggest a connection between the uterus and mental illness, was treated with herbs, hypnosis, and abstinence. It was believed to be a result of a lack of motherhood. So even when women suffered with mental illness, they were made to feel guilty for their failure to provide their husband or even society with children.



(Walker, Year Unknown)

←*(Tasca, C., Rapetti, M., Carta, M. G. and Fadda, B., 2012)*

Character Analysis: The Boss

His relationship with Mr. Zero:

The Boss can't remember Mr. Zero's name → showing how little he cares about his workers, and that he prioritises his profit. *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 12). Despite firing Mr. Zero, he ensures to apologise, do it in person and to discuss final pay details *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 13), he is confident and doesn't cut corners. The Boss says 'thanks' when Mr. Zero holds opens the door for him, which is their only other interaction *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 23). He scares Mr. Zero with his assertiveness, making Zero insecure and anxious, 'a big guy like that coming up to my desk. I felt like I was choking.'

His relationship with other employees:

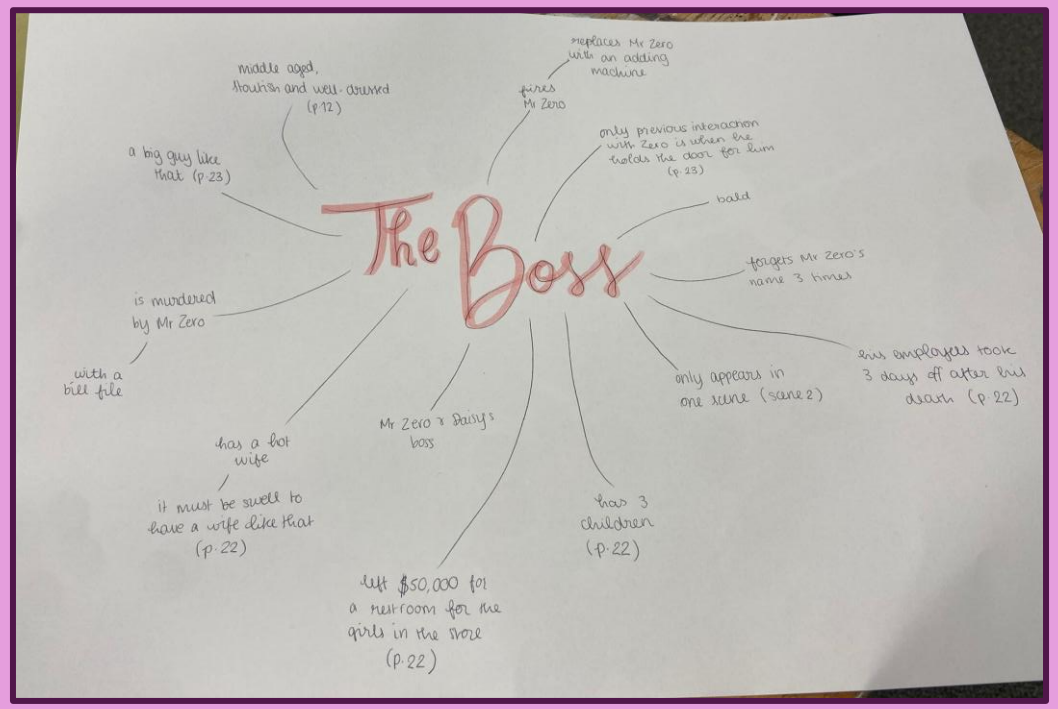
He donated $50,000 for a restroom for his female workers, as women's rights brought more women into the workplace it shows he is supportive of this. Although this could be due to women being paid less than men, meaning he saves on labour costs.

His Appearance:

The Boss is a middle aged, stoutish, bald, well-dressed man *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 12). Mr. Zero thinks his wife is beautiful, the Boss also has 3 children *(The Adding* Machine. 1923, p. 22)

His Death:

The Boss gets murdered by Mr. Zero with a bill file, right through the heart, we don't see this happen. His death changes the trajectory of the play, and he constantly mentioned throughout the rest of the play. His death results in 3 days off for the workers, pushing a capitalistic dystopia of your only time off work being when the boss gets murdered.



Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.

Character Analysis: The Boss



(Rajput, P. and Villarroel, K., 2025)

There was a ‘laissez-faire’ attitude amongst the upper classes, especially encouraged by President Warren G. Harding (1921-1923).

Urbanisation:

In the 1920s, America crossed the threshold of 50% urbanisation, with 5 urban areas in the USA containing a population of over 1 million, and 9 areas a population between 500,000 and 1 million. In 1920 there was still a decent amount of green land within cities, especially New York City, and in 1920 NYC had a population density of 10,000 people per square mile. *(Cox, 2013)*

The economic prosperity of the Roaring Twenties transformed America into a global economic power, especially as they were in a better position than most post-war. The rise in immigration and Americans moving to cities was a direct result of this. This prosperity began with the expansion of electricity and factories, meaning mass production and productivity. Along with the start of the assembly line. A new attitude of working long hours and earning more was pushed with the idea of the American Dream, a dream of hope and success for the working classes and encouraging them to move to cities for work. This created the modern consumer culture we’re familiar with today, along with new marketing techniques. *(Cunningham, 2025)*

Character Analysis: The Fixer

Props and Actions:

He uses a gold toothpick for his teeth, empties and cleans his pipe, has a wristwatch which he checks *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 33). He blows a police whistle to take Zero away and uses nail clipper to cut his nails once Zero is gone *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 34). He then puts on an enormous pair of horn-rimmed spectacles and reads a coloured comic supplement (newspaper), whilst sat. All of these things fill his 'innumerable pockets', are they for comedic purposes.

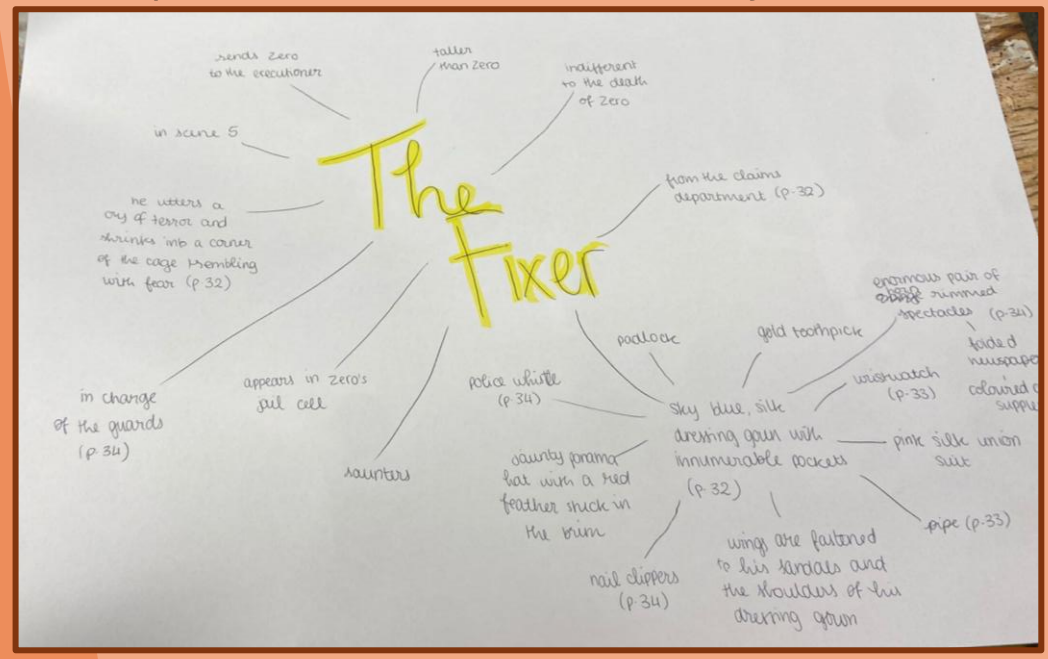
Personality and Purpose:

He strikes a God-fearing terror into Mr. Zero, as he screams when he sees him, but has a casual and calm demeanour. Zero seems insignificant to him, 'it's no use Zero. You're done for' *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 33). He is from the claims department, is this the afterlife version of wrongfully dead? The Fixer locks the cage and turns off the light when leaving. He seems bored of his job as 'He saunters off'. His role appears to be an angel that makes them accept their fate and sends them through to the afterlife, comforting them based on what they've been in their lifetime.

Appearance:

The Fixer is dressed in a sky-blue padded silk dressing gown with innumerable pockets *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 32). Underneath he's wearing a pink silk union suit, sandals, and a jaunty Panama hat with a red feather in the brim. He also has wings fastened to his sandals and the shoulders of his dressing gown. His costume is casual and comparative to something you would sleep in, suggesting he doesn't take the role too seriously and is comfortable in his position and authoritative nature to not need to dress to create fear.

Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.



Character Analysis: The Fixer



(Angelology Fandom, Year Unknown)

Angels and Mythology:

After researching a variety of religious and mythological figures *(Jorn, 2021)*, I found the Angel of justice and vengeance, Archangel Raguel. I chose to look into Archangel Raguel as a comparative image to The Fixer. Described in the Book of Enoch, an anonymously written text attributed to the wrong author, he is the Archangel of justice, peace, vengeance, fairness, harmony, and redemption. He empowered those who felt mistreated or unheard and seeked vengeance on those who violated God's laws. With high moral standards, he is high ranking and in charge of legal matters. Raguel's similarities to The Fixer are seen through their responsibility of correcting those who don't follow the morals and values of God, such as Mr. Zero- who also feels unheard, although he doesn't deserve empowerment in the eyes of God. *(Unnatural World Wiki, Year Unknown)*

"That makes 2,137 black eyes for Jeff" *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 35).

A black eye can be a slang term for something that damages someone's reputation *(Cambridge Dictionary, Year Unknown)*, I am uncertain who Jeff is and can't seem to find anything on the reference apart from the slang meaning.

Character Analysis: Judy O'Grady

Her Actions:

We only see Judy in scene 6, she opens the graveyard gate and enters with a man (supposedly her lover) *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 35). She is not scared of the graveyard and goes there often. Does she sleep with a lot of men there? Judy appears interested in the graves, noticing the new gravestones. Her date wants to leave and is scared, meanwhile Judy suggests doing something on Mr. Zero's grave as revenge to Zero. Her dialogue ends with 'You nervous men sure are the limit', suggesting an adventurous nature and confidence that overpowers men.

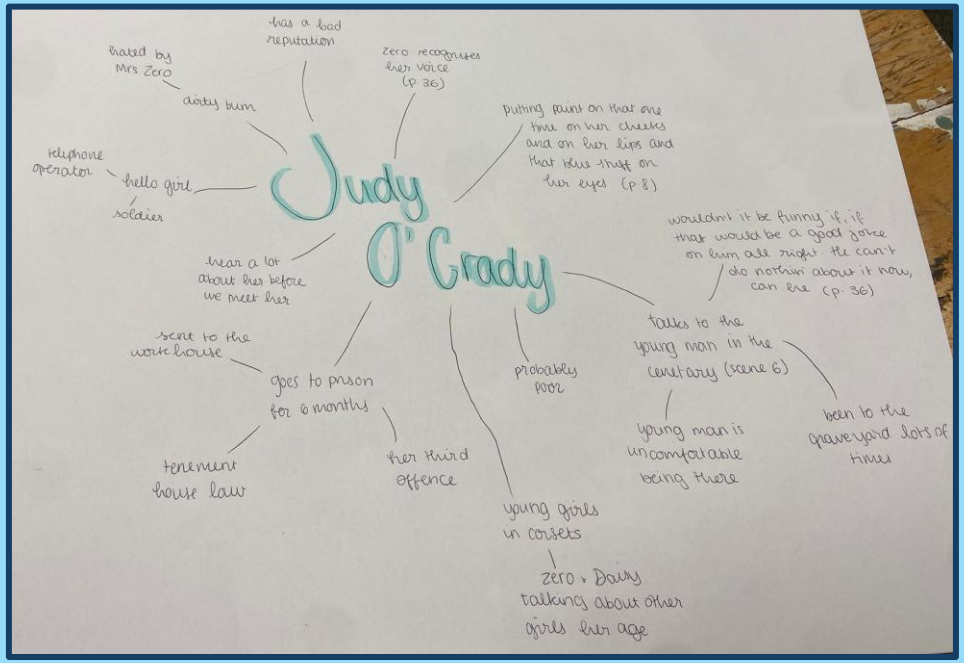
Her connection with Mr. Zero:

Mr. Zero gets her sent to the 'hoosegow', a hoosegow is a prison. Her reference of a 'third offence' suggests she's done something illegal twice before and now has a reputation for not being a respectable person. Mr. Zero would watch her change and walk around her house not wearing much through the window, which faced her house. He reports her as his wife catches him doing this and he doesn't want to get in trouble. Judy says Mr. Zero is 'mama's white-haired boy' (meaning the favourite child/mama's boy). Mr. Zero says that, when his wife was away, he should have gone over there (maybe to sleep with her), assuming Judy would even want him back. Mr. Zero is clueless and views women as an object for his pleasure and wants, regardless of how they feel.

Appearance and Personality:

Judy wears make up and blue eye shadow. She lives alone, exhibiting independence and the lifestyle of a 'new woman'. It is suggested that she is sexually promiscuous, controversial for the time period.

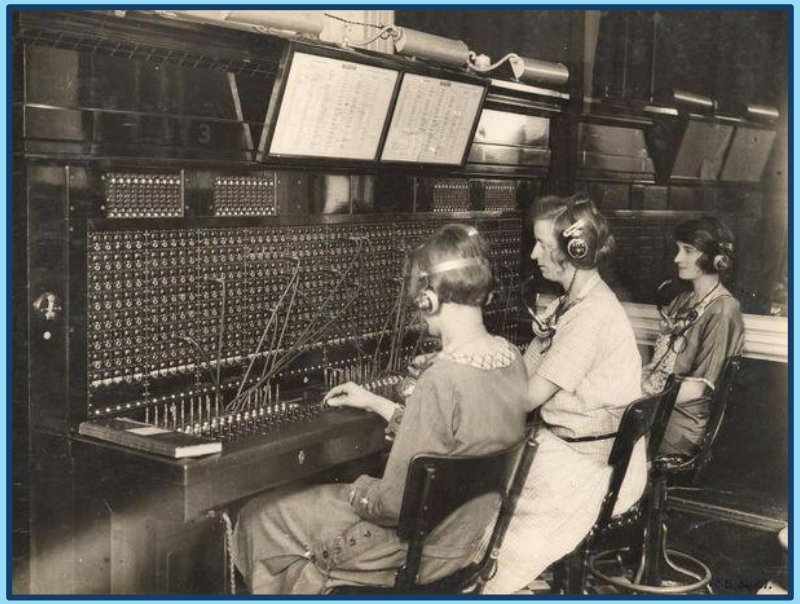
Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.



Character Analysis: Judy O'Grady



(Rothschild Research Center, Year Unknown)



(Transport for London Museum, Year Unknown)

Tenement House Law of 1901 in New York applied to multi-family housing usually for the poor who had fewer amenities (such as private toilets) *(Apmann, 2016)*. This new law required new buildings to have direct air and sunlight, meaning more windows, and more amenities. These were usually taller buildings *(Williamsburg Project, Year Unknown)*. It is suggested Judy lost her housing due to tenement laws meaning you couldn't have as many families on each floor, although this is also suggested to be an excuse made up due to Mr. Zero reporting her for indecency.

The 3 Strikes Law in America refers to the rule that if you commit 3 offenses you will go to prison (San Diego County, Year Unknown), this is what happened to Judy O'Grady.



(Apmann, 2016)

Judy is referred to as a 'Hello Girl', this was a unit of women who operated telephone switchboards, gaining this name as they greeted callers with 'hello' *(Hill, 2021)*. Judy was probably a switchboard operator.

Character Analysis: Shrdlu

Appearance:

When we meet him, Shrdlu sneezes and scares Zero. In the graveyard he is dressed in a shabby, ill-fitting cutaway, with silver-trimmed spectacles and smoking camel cigarettes to keep the mosquitoes away*(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 37). He is 33 years old when he gets executed.

His Crime and His Past:

He killed his mother whilst trying to carve a leg of lamb (accidentally?). Believes he has a sinful nature and is told by his minister he will burn for eternity in Hell *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 41). The book Treasure Island made him run away when he was 14 and he becomes a proofreader at 20, working on the shoe catalogue for 13 years. He went to church with his mum three times a day on Sundays. Shrdlu is clingy to her and they both couldn't bare being separated.

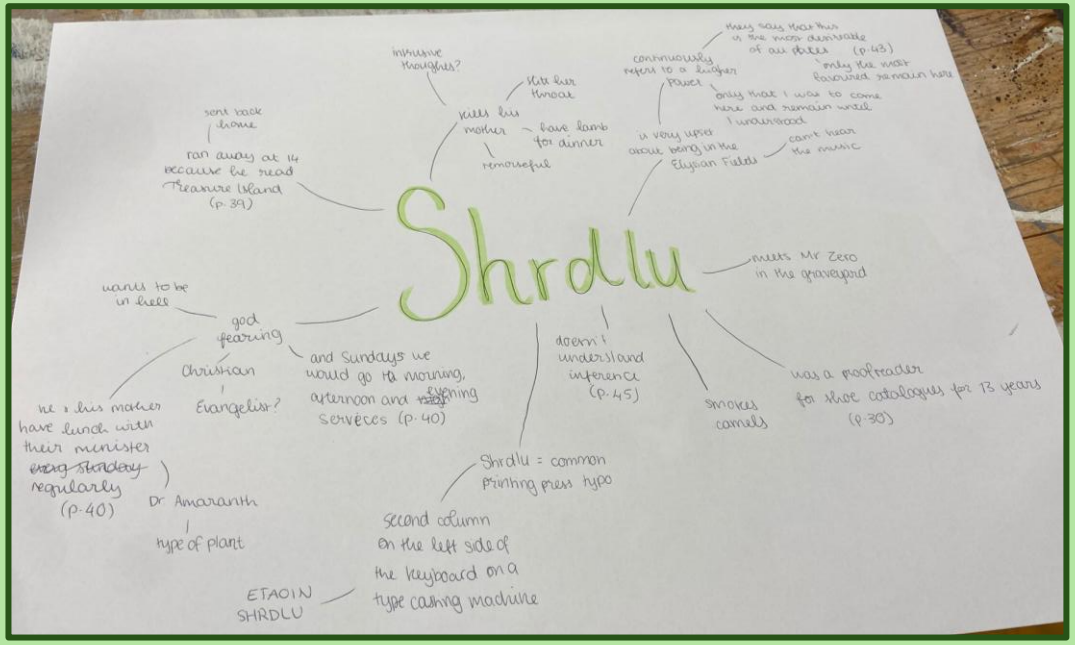
Personality:

Shrdlu comforts Zero when he arrives and assures him the stiffness will wear off. He is God-fearing and hyper-religious. Unfazed by Zero's crime as he believes his is worse,

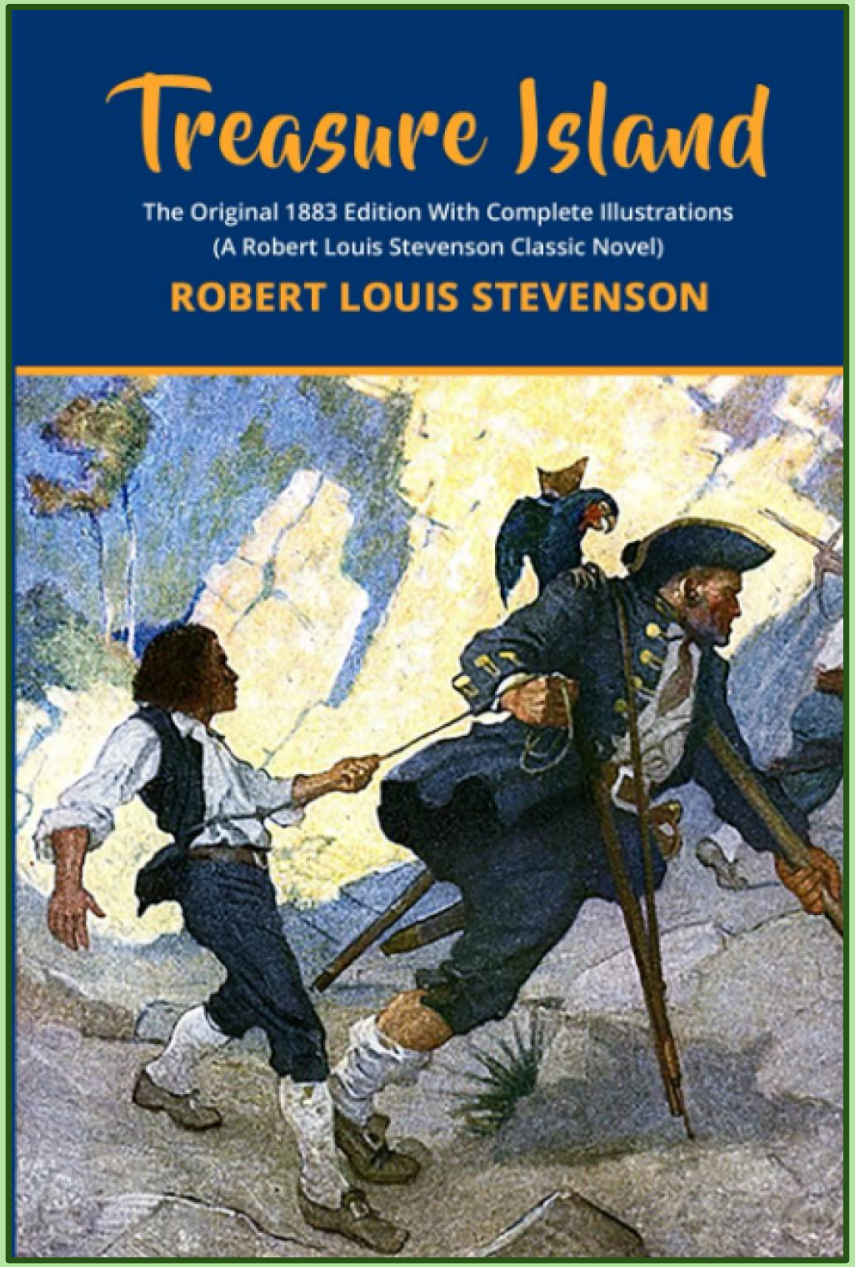
Afterlife:

In Scene 7 he is depressed to be in the Elysian Fields. He can't hear the music and seated under a tree. Shrdlu wants to find his mum to apologise but can't and is confused as to why she's not in heaven. He talks about a higher power, 'they say this is the most desirable of all places. Only the most favourable remain here' *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 43), 'I was to come here and remain until I understood', 'Only the most favourable do remain. But anyone may'. He is confused and upset by people wanting to enjoy themselves, do nothing/relax, and sing/do art. At the end he is left at the tree, alone, pondering.

Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.



Character Analysis: Shrdlu



Treasure Island was written in 1883 by Robert Louis Stevenson. It is the story of a boy on a search for treasure. Starting with a pirate telling tales of buried treasure and hidden maps to find it. He searches for it with a crew of pirates turning against each other at sea *(RLS Website, Year Unknown)*. Based on the impact this book had on Shrdlu, it suggests he dreams of escape and adventure and a life not tied down to someone or somewhere. It is not a sinful book as he describes, but one of childlike hope and excitement.

←*(Amazon, Year Unknown)*



(Shook, 2015)

Post-WW1, the ***Fundamentalist church*** was formed by conservative Americans wanting traditional values. Starting a reaction against the Jazz Age and modernisation, sparking a religious revival. They believed strongly in what the Bible said and condemned anything that went against it *(BBC Bitesize, Year Unknown)*. Shrdlu and his mum were probably fundamentalists, this is why he is racked with guilt and shame as it has been drilled into his subconscious.

Character Analysis: Lieutenant Charles

Appearance:

Lieutenant Charles is middle aged and inclined to corpulence (tendency to be overweight). He has an air of world weariness and is barefoot. The Lieutenant wears bright red tights (that are both too loose and too tight) and a Panama hat (the same as the Fixer) → a Panama hat was a trendy summer hat *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 55)

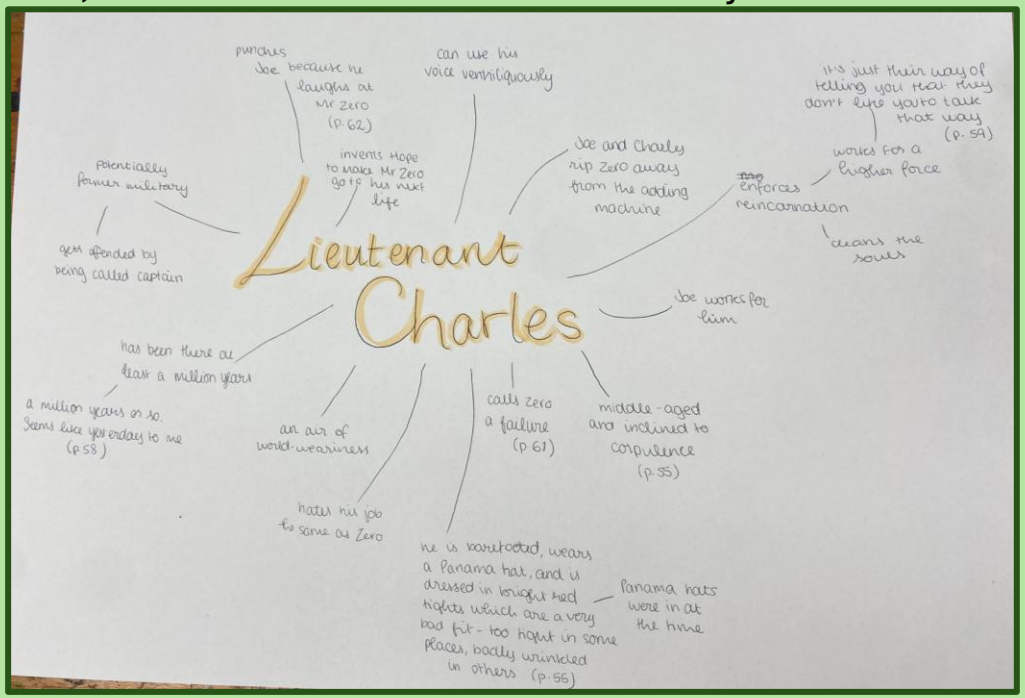
Role and Personality:

It takes an enormous effort to pull Mr. Zero away from the Adding machine, leaving Charles and Joe sweaty. Charles is the opposite of the Fixer, sending people to their new lives, tracking whether people improve or get worse. He is impatient but remembers everyone's souls and past lives. He is not in charge, he works for a higher power and doesn't question their rules. He also has no sense of time, a million years feels like yesterday to him. The Lieutenant is nonchalant like the Fixer. He has witnessed the evolution of life on the planet and might have been there since the beginning. His title is a Lieutenant and Joe works for him. He refuses to be called Captain which shows he is respectful of the line of authority.

Relationship with Mr. Zero:

The Lieutenant calls Zero a failure, trying tough love on him, or maybe he is just impatient. When he realises tough love won't work, he creates a 'woman' for Zero to follow, catering to Zero's soul. He names the woman 'Hope', symbolic of what he's meant to give Zero in order to carry on through the next life. Once Zero has left he punches Joe to put him in his place for making fun of Zero, Charles respects souls enough to not mock them and takes their emotions seriously, despite how long he's worked there. Is he a slave to the higher power? He sits down, looks weary and dispirited, and sips from a flask (dislikes his job or is stressed from it). His job is to clean up souls and send them back, he describes it as a cosmic laundry.

Mind map created as a class and drawn by Annie Picton.



Reincarnation is the rebirth of an individual after the death of their physical body. Their soul is able to transfer. In the 5th to 4th Century BCE, Plato believed in an immortal soul that could be reincarnated after each death. *(Britannica Editors, 2025)*

Location List:

- Mr. and Mrs. Zero's House – Bedroom and Dining Room
- Office of a department store
- Court of Justice
- Large Cage
- A Graveyard
- Elysian Fields
- Office in the afterlife (with the Adding Machine)
- New York



(Lakritz, 2025)

New York in the 1920s:

The 1920s in America were known as the Roaring Twenties. Post World War One, America was filled with hedonism and excitement, known for its flapper girls and speakeasies. But America was also in conflict at this time between thriving and growing culture and social unrest. With modernism and urbanism was also the Prohibition and the start of the Ku Klux Klan *(Zeitz, Year Unknown)*. The Prohibition made alcohol an illegal substance, resulting in an increase in crime and gangs, as people illegally sold alcohol to the upper classes, who were the only ones who could afford it.



(Thomas, 2023)

The end of World War One sparked an excitement and carefree attitude. *(Hindley, 2023)*



(BBC Bitesize, Year Unknown, a)

F. Scott Fitzgerald, a famous author of the time, depicts 1920s America and New York during the '20s perfectly in his 1925 novel 'The Great Gatsby', which depicts the harsh class divide. The 1920s were a great time for the upper class, not everyone.

In 1920 women gained the right to vote and there was an increase of women in the workplace. Along with this came a decrease in the desire for children as women were able to live independently now, as well as a more comfortable expression of sexuality within in society.

Working hours decreased, due to new machinery, and wages increased, Americans had more time and money to spend *(Zeitz, Year Unknown)*. This meant there was a rise in cinema and entertainment available, this was also because of a new freedom in exploring creativity.

New York in the 1920s Continued:

Immigration Act of 1921:

(Hall, 2021) →

As mentioned previously, the rapid urbanisation led to a rapid increase in immigration. The Immigration Act of 1921 came as a reaction to fear around unemployment and the spread of certain ideologies, such as communism. The act limited the number of immigrants allowed from each country *(EBSCO, Year Unknown)*. In 1910, it was recorded that 13.5 million residents were not born in the USA *(Martin and Midgley, 2010)*. This fear sparked a prejudice in Americans and a fear of shortages. *(Morton, 2024)*



Brooklyn in the 1920s:

In Scene 2, Mr. Zero references Mrs. Zero visiting someone in Brooklyn for the night, when fantasising about Judy.
Brooklyn in the 1920s quickly developed into a thriving urban area, previously having been suburban. It had a wide range of housing for both wealthy and working-class families.
(Saul, Year Unknown)

(Saul, Year Unknown)



New Jersey in the 1920s:

In Scene Two, Mr. Zero references moving to New Jersey, if he had the money. I chose to look into New Jersey's reputation around this time, as I wondered if it was seen as a suburban fantasy where mainly wealthy people lived. In the 1920s, New Jersey was seen as America's most diverse and industrial state, it was progressive in its political and social ideas. The population grew there as many factories opened to support the war effort, creating new work opportunities. It was also conveniently close to the busier and livelier city New York. *(New Jersey Government, Year Unknown)*

New York in the 1920s Continued:

Transport:

Mr. Zero mentions both car models, the Buick and the Tin Lizzie, in Scene 2 when dreaming of his life with money. A Buick was a classy looking car but still an 'everyman' car, as they weren't priced or marketed as luxury cars (Dodge Charger Fan, 2017). Even in Mr. Zero's daydreams he isn't original, and he fails to dream big. Perhaps he only wants a simple life not a fancy one.

Whilst a Tin Lizzie is the nickname of the Model T by Ford, named after the same car named 'Old Lizz' won a race that no one thought it would as it looked so battered. It was an affordable car for the average American and had a reputation of looking run down. *(Rosenburg, 2019)*



(Bonhams, Year Unknown)



(Trevena, 2019)



(Lakritz, 2025)

Public Transport:

Despite almost mocking a Tin Lizzie, Mr. Zero probably can't even afford one of those, as he takes public transport. In the 1920s, public transport improved massively with the increase in suburbs. The New York subway system opened in 1905 and expanded the distance people could work from their homes.

(Lakritz, 2025)

New York in the 1920s Continued:

All of the theatres Mrs. Zero references in her Scene One monologue.



(Unknown Photographer, 1920)

The Strand:

The Strand theatre was designed by Thomas Lamb, who also designed Madison Square Garden in 1922 *(New Jersey Historic Trust, Year Unknown)*. The Strand opened in 1920, so would have been relatively new and exciting. It was advertised as New York's most beautiful theatre. With enough seating for 1,993 people and an organ built in. *(Roe, 2017)*

The Peter Stuyvesant:

David Belasco opened the Peter Stuyvesant theatre in 1907, later renaming it after himself to become the Belasco Theatre, as it known today. It was designed by George Keister. *(Playbill, Year Unknown)*

(Geographic Guide, Year Unknown)



The Rosebud:

Unfortunately, I couldn't find any information on The Rosebud, so I assume it must have been a more local theatre that became largely forgotten about.

Prison in the 1920s:

Only in the early 1900s did America start making female only prisons and institutions *(Rubin, 2015)*.
In 1890 New York became the first state to use the electric chair for capital punishment, which was seen as a more humane method. New York also had, unfortunately, the most deaths by capital punishment which were later proven innocent.
They centralised capital punishment around the same time, putting a stop to local executions.
(Lumer, 1995)

Mr. and Mrs. Zero's House:

Scene One:

In Scene One we see the bedroom, described as a small bedroom with Installment plan furniture and an 'ugly' light fixture with a single naked lamp. There is one small window, and the shade is drawn
The walls are covered in foolscap, with columns of figures down them.
(The Adding Machine, 1923, p. 3)



← *(Jones, 2023)*

Scene Three:

In Scene 3, the party, we see the dining room. The entrance door is on the right and the doors to the kitchen and bedroom are on the left. *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 14)
The same foolscap column wallpaper is used and there is a table upstage set for two, with seven chairs in symmetrical rows either side of room. There is also a clock on the wall and a rack for hat and coats by the door. The kitchen is never seen but mentioned, plates are taken through to there and a tablecloth is brought out from there to go on the table upstage.
Mr. and Mrs. Zero have 12 guests, this is Mr. Zero's last supper, carrying through the religious connotations.

Installment Plan Furniture:
Many things were too expensive for working class people in the 1920s. Installment plans meant they could buy furniture (or even cars and clothes) and pay for it in gradual installments, making life a lot more affordable for them. *(Weebly, Year Unknown)*

Foolscap Paper:
Foolscap was the most common paper format in the 1920s, slightly larger than A4 and named after its watermark of a Fool. The walls are covered in it, foreshadowing to Scene Eight where the room is filled with the Adding Machine's paper, also holding implications that Zero is a fool. *(Jones, 2023)*

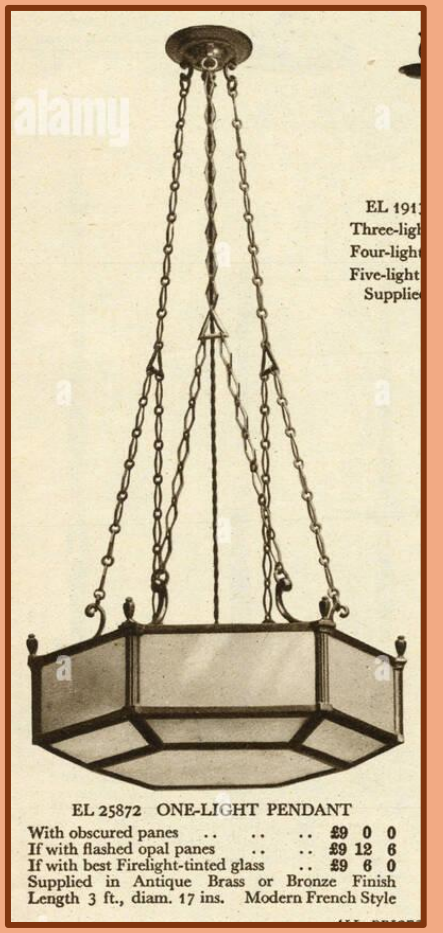
The Office:

We see the office in Scene Two and a similar one in Scene Eight. It is a classic office of the time, in a department store in New York.
There are wood and glass partitions and in the middle of the room are 2 tall desks back-to-back with high stools next to them, making it an awkward height and uncomfortable posture, creating an unhappy and tense atmosphere.
There are piles of slips on one desk, large square sheet of ruled paper on the other, a more refined version of the foolscap walls and Scene Eight's never-ending pile.
There is storage somewhere behind the desks for hats and belongings.
The door at the left is used by Zero and Daisy to enter and leave work, whilst the door at the right leads to the Boss's office or another part of the store.
A revolving platform is revealed for the end of the scene. *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 6-14)

Pendant Electric Lamp:
Pendant lights were popular in the 1920s and had an Art-Deco style. They were a simple design and usually had opal glass and brass, as seen in the image below. They were suspended from the ceiling by a chain. *(Mullan Lighting, Year Unknown)*
One is hanging in the middle of the office in Scene Two.



(Selency, Year Unknown) ←



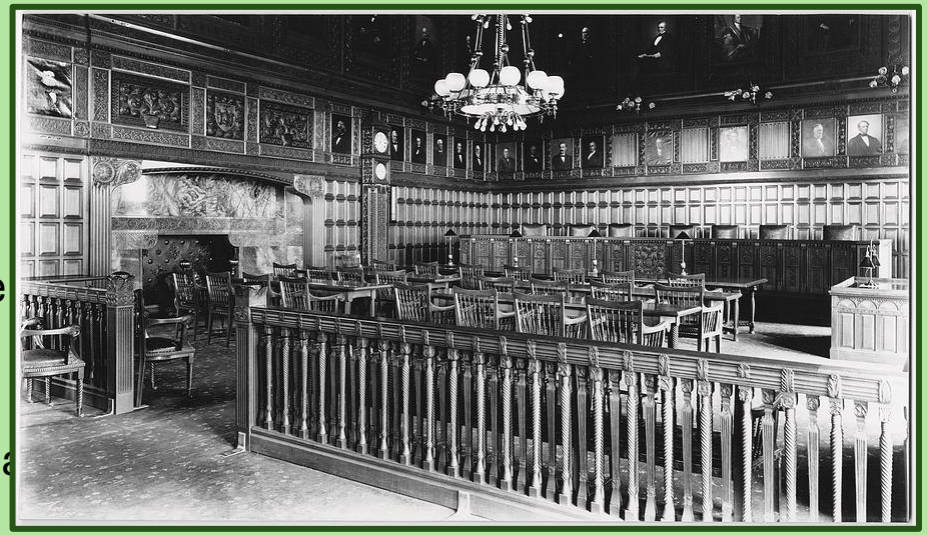
(Alamy, Year Unknown) →

Eye and Sleeve Protectors:

Green eye shades were worn to help reduce strain and fatigue by filtering the harsh electric bulbs and gas lamps. *(David, 2025)*
Sleeve protectors were worn to prevent ruining your shirts and clothes, in Zero's case to prevent ink on your sleeves. Disposable paper collars and cuffs were also used. (Liberman, 2012)

Court of Justice:

Scene Four takes place in a Court of Justice. With 3 bare white walls, no windows and one door on the right wall.
The right side of room has a jury box with 12 jurors seated. Opposite the jury is one long oa table piled high with law books, Zero seated behind the table facing the jury. *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 20)
The American court system has the Federal Court and the State Court. A Federal Court is for federal law, for example obstructions to the constitution. Whilst a State Court is for most criminal cases *(United States Courts, Year Unknown)*.
Mr. Zero would have been tried in a State Court. Courts in the 1920s became backlogged with Prohibition cases, and so a separate department was created to handle these. *(Supreme Court of the State of New York, 2014)*
Courtrooms looked similar to today. They had a raised bench for the judge, a jury box, seating for those watching, and tables for the lawyers.



(New York Historical Society, 2019)



(Bridgeman Images, Year Unknown) →

The Cage:

In Scene Five Mr. Zero is in prison. In a large cage with bars on all 4 sides, centre stage. The bars are far apart, and the interior is visible. The floor of the cage is six feet above the stage. Wooden steps lead up to it at the front. There is a single naked light bulb and a table in the middle with Zero seated with platter of ham and eggs and a large wooden spoon.
Execution of the time was the electric chair, although it's suggested he might get beheaded with an axe.
Door at the back which gets padlocked. *(The Adding Machine, 1923, p. 25)*

The Graveyard:

Scene Six we are in a second-rate graveyard with no elaborate headstones/tombstones, only simple ones, and some crosses 'here or there'.
There is an iron fence at the back with a gate in the middle, the gate is rusty. It is nighttime with full moonlight and there is a headstone with Zero's name on it. A skull gets thrown from a grave and heads are able to poke up and climb out of graves. Mosquitoes in the graveyard suggests damp or water nearby. *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 35)

(Gordon and Nowaczyk, 2023)



The Elysian Fields:

In Scene Seven we are in the Elysian Fields. As only some can hear the music, I think it's possible that the Fields are seen differently for everyone. Whether you can hear the music or not represents whether you are good and understand and have been forgiven or have repented.
It is described as a pleasant place of pastoral loveliness with a meadow dotted with old trees and covered in rich grass and field flowers. In the background there's colourful-striped tents and silks, a meandering river, and a 'fleckless' clear blue sky. The tree in the foreground has space to sit and music is playing constantly. *(The Adding Machine,* 1923, p. 42)

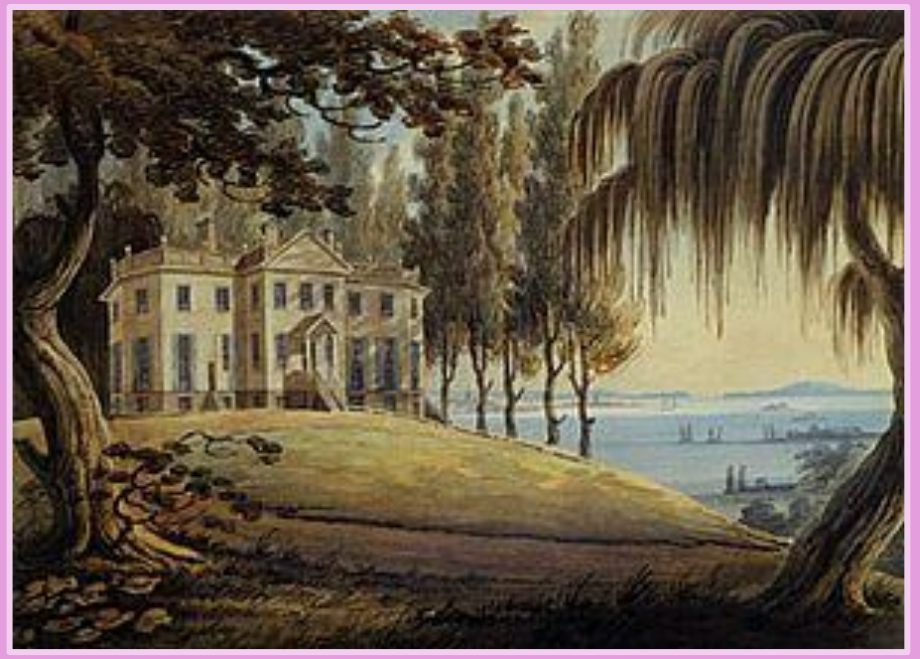
The Elysian Fields, in Greek Mythology, is reserved for heroic souls, everyone else resides in the Underworld after death (which is not necessarily hell, just not a paradise). The Fields were seen as another plane of existence, rather than up in the sky *(Gordon and Nowaczyk, 2023)*. When reincarnation became theorised, there were 2 Elysian Fields. One for those that would return to Earth and live another life, and another for those who would no longer reincarnate, the latter being an island. *(Theoi Project, Year Unknown)*

The Elysian Fields Continued:



(Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2003)

Dean Swift is mentioned by Shrdlu as someone in the Elysian Fields. Jonathan Swift (Dean Swift) born 1667 and died 1745, wrote Gulliver's Travels in 1726 *(Travsd, 2022)*. The story follows a hero shipwrecked on an island of tiny people, with similar themes to Treasure Island. Swift's works were satirical and considered controversial as he was a clergyman of the Church of Ireland. There is the suggestion that he has an 'unrefined' reputation.



(Kiddle, 2025)

Abbe Rabelais is a reference to ***Francois Rabelais (***died 1553) and 'L'Abbaye de Theleme' from his work Gargantua (1534), which contained controversial philosophical ideas *(Funkyturtle, 2007)*. L'Abbaye is a utopian abbey in which there are no wall, no schedules, no separation of women and men, and no celibacy. With one single rule: 'Do What You Want' *(Musee Rabelais, Year Unknown)*. This is similar to the atmosphere and attitudes in the Elysian Fields, as everyone seems to relax and do as they please, whether that be art or nothing at all.



← *(Tanje, 1739)*

The Elysian Fields was also a park in New Jersey, in the 1800s. It was a popular place to visit from New York City and went along the riverfront. It had many different sports areas, rides, and fishing spots. Colonel Stevens, who owned the park, described it as a 'place for everyone', similar to the Elysian Fields in *The Adding Machine*, as there seems to be no logic in who goes there. *(Kiddle, 2025)*

Afterlife Office:

In Scene Eight we are in a similar office to Scene Two, but on the same plane of existence as the Elysian Fields. There is a door in the back wall, through which a corridor is visible, so it is possibly a glass door.
In the middle of the room is an adding machine, with keys and levers, and with Zero seated in front of it. The room full of white paper tape (buried in it) covering walls, doors, and the floor.
There is presumably a door at the left. Which Lieutenant Charles and Joe enter through. Zero exits out of the door leading to the corridor.
(The Adding Machine, 1923, p. 54)

Adding Machines first came about in the 18th century, only becoming commercially available in the late 19th century. Most Adding Machines had columns of keys for each digit, and some could print the numbers and sums entered. These were all operated manually, until around the mid 20th century. *(National Museum of American History, Year Unknown)*



Offices in the 1920s had grand desks for senior staff and a static place to work under constant supervision for employees *(Creatif, Year Unknown)*. Standardisation in the early 20th century made it easier to track work-flow and so more restrictions and expectations were introduced. Offices were open spaces with no partitions and people worked in complete silence. By the 1920s, office work and a factory's assembly line were very similar. *(Smithsonian Education, Year Unknown)*

Both Images Sourced from Early Office Museum (Year Unknown)



Germany in the 1920s:



(Science Photo Library, Year Unknown)

Germany in the 1920s was known as 'The Golden Age'. After the abdication of the Kaiser and the loss of World War One, the Weimar Republic was established, and Germany began to rebuild itself and its relationships with other countries.



(Wikipedia, Year Unknown)

The beginning of the 1920s saw hyperinflation, as Germany struggled to pay the post-war reparations, they bankrupted themselves and a new currency was created to solve this. As the Weimer Republic gained momentum, wages rose, pensions and sickness benefits were created, and there were subsidies for housing and public facilities.

All information on this page sourced from BBC Bitesize (Year Unknown, b)

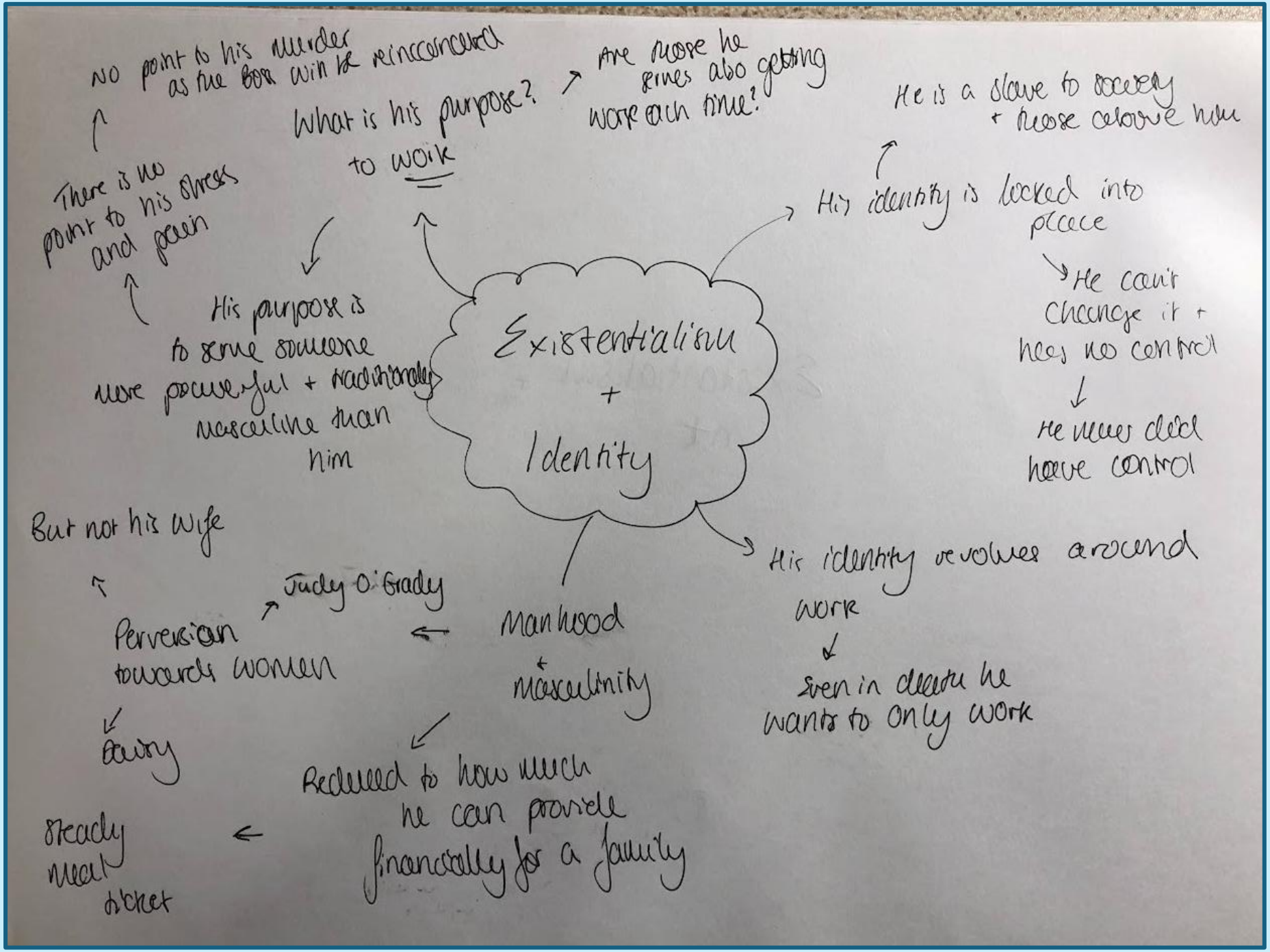
Post-war, many women felt pressured to return to traditional household roles after their contribution to the workforce during the war. But by the mid-1920s women had the right to vote and were welcomed back into the workplace. There were even female politicians. The idea of the 'New Woman' arose, the idea of more freedom for women in society. The ability to go out alone, have short hair and short dresses, smoke and drink publicly, and take part in sports.

Themes:

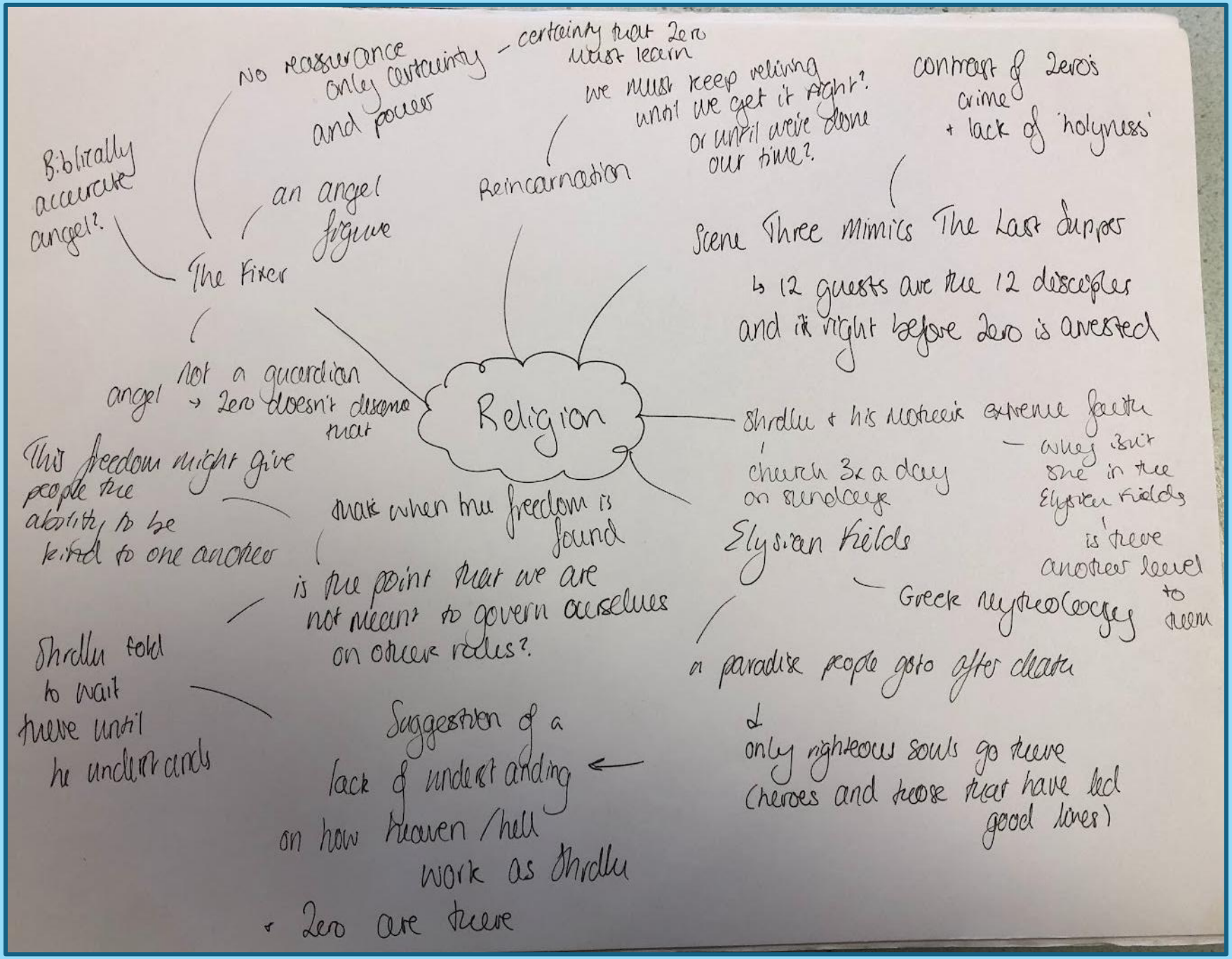
→ Existentialism
→ Death (murder/suicide)
→ Gender roles
→ Capitalism
→ Man vs. society
→ Man vs. machine
→ Guilt and Catholic guilt
→ Religion
→ Redemption/forgiveness
→ Rebirth
→ Change/transformation
→ Lust/perversion
→ Sexism

→ Racism
→ Conformity
→ Technology
→ Class divide
→ Justice
→ Feminism
→ Greed
→ Crime
→ Alienation
→ Numerology
→ Identity
→ Hegemony/plutocracy

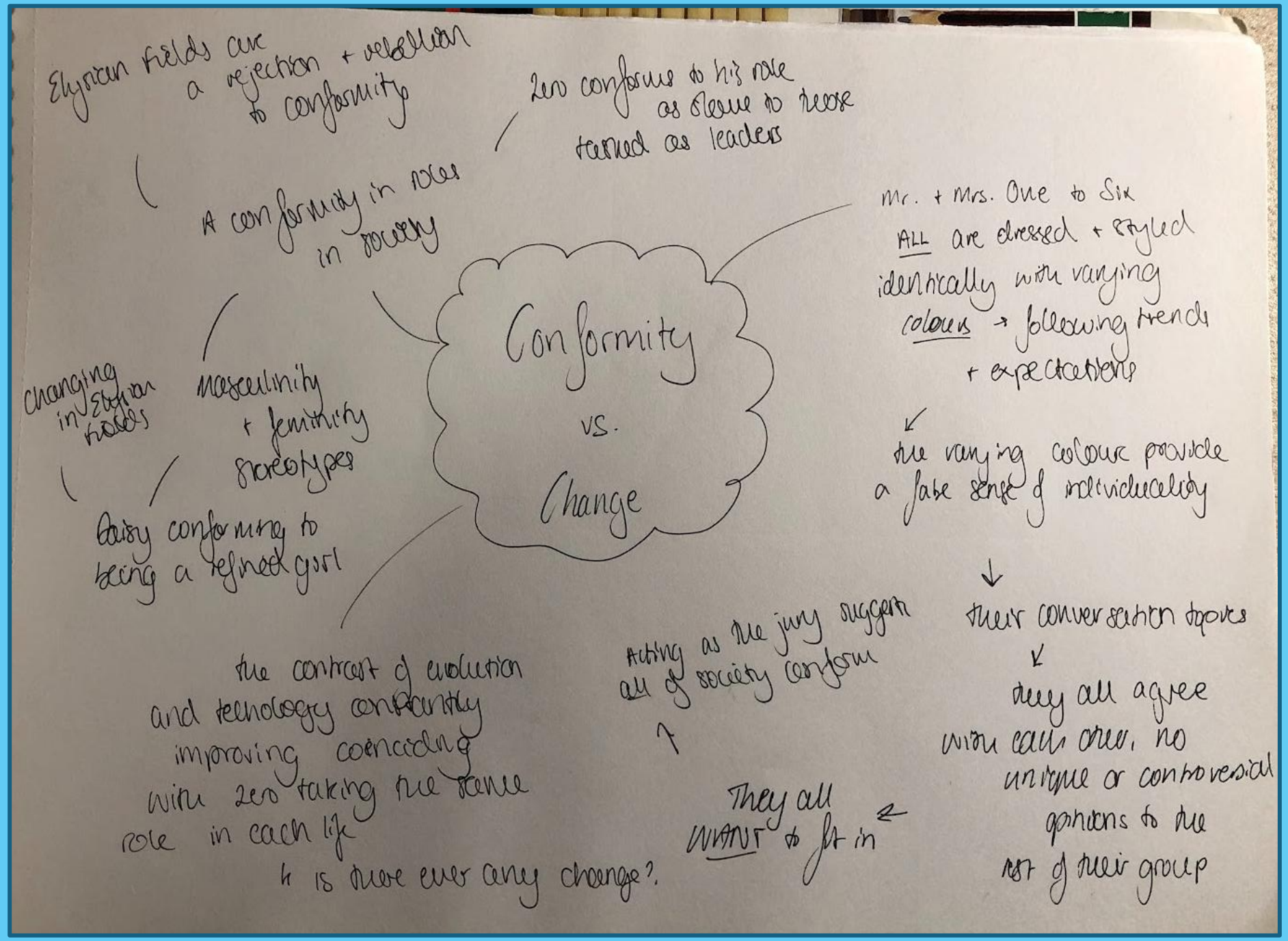
Theme Analysis: Existentialism and Identity



Theme Analysis: Religion



Theme Analysis: Conformity vs. Change



Analysis Questions:

1.What is the Plot?
The plot follows Mr. Zero, an average man living an average life, who reaches his breaking point and murders his boss. He explores the afterlife, from the graveyard moving into paradise, returning to do what he despised, his job. Before returning to Earth as a reincarnation of himself.

2. What is the theme/message?
In my opinion, the overall message of the play is to question conformity within society and to explore a life outside of the norms (although not in the same violent way Mr. Zero does). I also think Rice wants you to question what the meaning or point is to life, and whether such a thing as purpose exists. Alongside this, how much control we have over our own lives and if it's possible to regain any control.

3.What is the logic? Does the story make sense?
As an expressionist play which explores the afterlife, there is no logic to the story, as it is all a possibility not a definite. The exaggeration of the real world, where men and women dress the same, is not realistic. The way Mr. Zero travels through the different realms of the afterlife is fantastical and dreamlike. The main character's motivations are even illogical, as he shows no desire to have killed his boss and yet regret for it either, he professes his love to Daisy and then forgets his feelings immediately.

4. What is the exposition? What are the characters thinking and doing?
Mr. Zero → His thoughts are unknown and almost empty. He is presented as if he is just a shell/animal that acts on impulse. His main priority is self preservation, and his actions directly correlate to this, he feels threatened by his boss and so kills him without thinking, he feels attraction to a woman so longs to be with her despite being married.
Mrs. Zero → Her thoughts centre around what society wants her to concern herself with, whether that be movies and local gossip and appearing as the good housewife, or complaining about her husband who she believes doesn't live up to what society wants him to be. She prioritises appearances rather than emotion and her actions centre around this.
Daisy Devore → Daisy's thoughts are more emotional than all of the characters, she focuses on her desire for love and the idea of it, spending her time fantasising about love. In contrast to this, she is extremely depressed and suicidal, perhaps because she has no love and that is what she seems to live for.

Analysis Questions:

Question 4 Continued →

Her actions begin similarly to Mrs. Zero, acting for appearances only, transitioning into a carefree and passionate approach where she does what she wants without hesitation (now that she's dead), such as professing her love to Mr. Zero and wanting to stay and dance in paradise forever.

Mr. and Mrs. One through Six → These people are written to have identical thoughts, opinions, appearances, and interests. They think what society pushes onto them and mimic each other in every way. Their actions are unremarkable, even as the jury they don't have to decide as he confesses so freely.

The Fixer → a more mechanical person, in comparison to Lieutenant Charles, his actions are professional and 'by the book', he has a job to do, and he does it without hesitation or patience for Mr. Zero's feelings. From this we can assume his thoughts are quite neutral towards the people he meets (murderers and other criminals) and he is numbed towards it.

Shrdlu → a guilt-ridden mind, his thoughts revolve around his sinful nature and the horrors of his actions, focussing on his emotions towards his mother who he loved so much as well as the promise of being punished and burned for eternity. He is accountable and repents, he truly believes he deserves to suffer and wishes for it to come sooner. His actions show his remorse as he longs to find his mother and apologise.

Question 4 Continued →

Lieutenant Charles → his actions are more personable than the Fixer's, he is less professional and shows a surprising amount of patience and interest in talking to Mr. Zero. He is passionate about doing his job right but frustrated and tired of having to convince people like Mr. Zero their lack of significance in the grand scheme of things.

5. What is the complication? The Drama?

The main complication of the story is Mr. Zero's crime, as the story builds up to it in the beginning, follows the immediate consequences, and then proceeds to explore the significance of it and the meaning of his crime in the bigger picture of life.

6. What creates the tension?

The tension created in the build up to Mr. Zero's reveal at the end of Scene 3 is his silence. Zero's lack of input and action, the way he fades into the background, builds a curiosity and false security. This tension is then carried on slightly in Scene 5, when Mr. Zero is saying goodbye to Mrs. Zero in the cage before his execution. His answers are short and have no substance, the sudden change to pleading for another chance creates tension in the audience as we aren't used to him being emotional.

Analysis Questions:

7. What is the main question? The problem to be solved?
The main problem to be solved in the play is how to break the cycle of Zero's life and to hold him accountable for his actions in a way that will inspire change. Alongside the question of, if people who do bad things don't burn for eternity as a punishment, will they heal/improve as people?

8. What is the main event? What hooks the audience?
The main event that grabs the audience's attention is Mr. Zero murdering his boss. His established weak and passive character is broken down suddenly as we discover something we didn't think he was capable of. His response to it throughout the next few scenes holds the audience's attention through curiosity, is he more complex than we thought he was?

9. What causes the action?
Due to the drastic action Mr. Zero takes, it's difficult to imagine what caused it as he seemed too cowardly to even ask his boss a question or to be honest and upfront with him. I believe the culmination of Mrs. Zero's criticisms, alongside his own growing personal insecurities about his character and failures, led to the main event through him reaching a breaking point.

10. What is the resulting action? How is the main problem solved?
I don't think there is a resulting action in the sense that the play is cyclical in structure, I think the point is that there is no result and Mr. Zero will just continue blindly, possibly even getting worse as each life goes on. There is no solution presented, as Rice suggests we have no control over anything, not even our rebellion.

11. What is the conclusion?
The conclusion of the story is that Mr. Zero must be reincarnated and return to Earth as a baby to live a whole new life, although he is destined to be a slave and work in every lifetime to serve someone more powerful than him. Despite his strong objections, he is lured away by the idea of a beautiful woman, and so again is reduced to an animalistic nature.

12. Who is the protagonist?
I think Mr. Zero is the protagonist in an anti-hero style, as none of his actions are moral or right and his intentions are quite disgusting and shallow. But we follow his story and his experience only.

Analysis Questions:

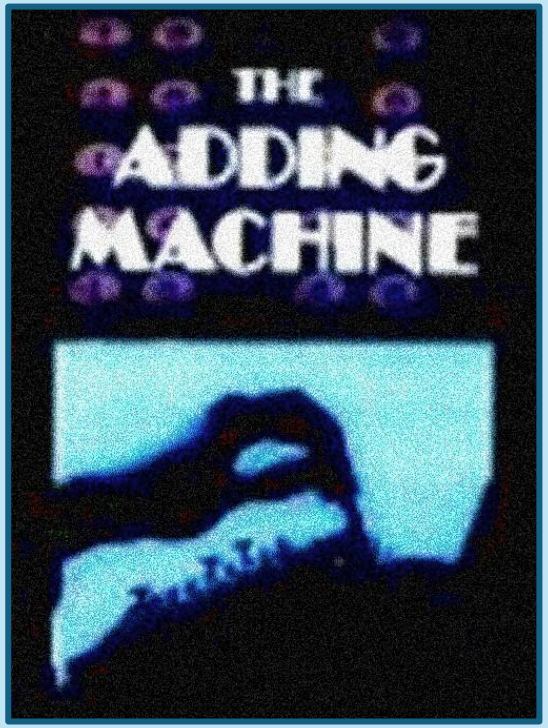
13. Who is the antagonist?
The antagonist is more of a concept in this play, I believe it is meant to be the structure of society and the system everyone is trapped into (a capitalistic system), which limits them and keeps them working forever without any freedom or joy.

14. Who is the most interesting character?
I think the most interesting character is Shrdlu. I find him fascinating as, despite every character being blunt and honest, Shrdlu is the most passionate and intense personality. I like how guilt-ridden he is and the acceptance of the idea he will burn forever. Despite his strong religious beliefs, I think he displays depth in his character when he appears more curious and confused about the Elysian Fields whilst Mr. Zero merely seems angry and disgusted.

15. Where does the story take place?
The story takes place in New York, in America. Once they move into the afterlife, the rest of the story takes place in an unknown realm in between. We are uncertain where they are, but know that it is the afterlife and that it is an illogical and impossible space.

I found the Analysis Questions more difficult to complete for The Adding Machine than I did for Nights at the Circus, I think this is because of the main character's unclear motivations and emotions, as well as the subjective message of the story due to its exploration of what happens after death. I think these questions have definitely helped my understanding and view of the play.

Adaptations of the Play:



(IMDb, Year Unknown)

Zero and Daisy have an actual goodbye where he tells her not to follow him as they can't be happy together anywhere, I like the closure you get from this addition, as it left a loose end in the original play. She is the one he sees are the end when he's lured back to Earth.

The Movie Adaptation (1969)

Directed by Jerome Epstein and designed by Jack Shampan.

A review from *Drake (2022)* says some elements of the film were cut and changed but the same message was carried through. I decided to watch the 1969 movie adaptation to see how it was altered and produced. The court scene is no longer a monologue and becomes a fully interactive segment where Zero's interrogated on the stand, the actor delivers this a lot less assured than I imagined, playing him weak and adding a humanity to his character.

Rather than having Shrdlu and Zero meet in prison before their execution, Shrdlu is played a lot more psychopathically than I imagined but I like this take on him. There's no cage, tour guide, or winged man and the whole film leans itself towards realism rather than expressionism, I think this is a shame because there are a lot of editing and special effects tricks you can achieve on film that isn't possible in theatre. Instead of the Elysian Fields, Zero finds himself in a fun fair style environment, I dislike this edit as I feel it Americanises the story and changes the point of this scene from paradise to greed. *(The Adding Machine, 1969)*

(Modcinema, Year Unknown)



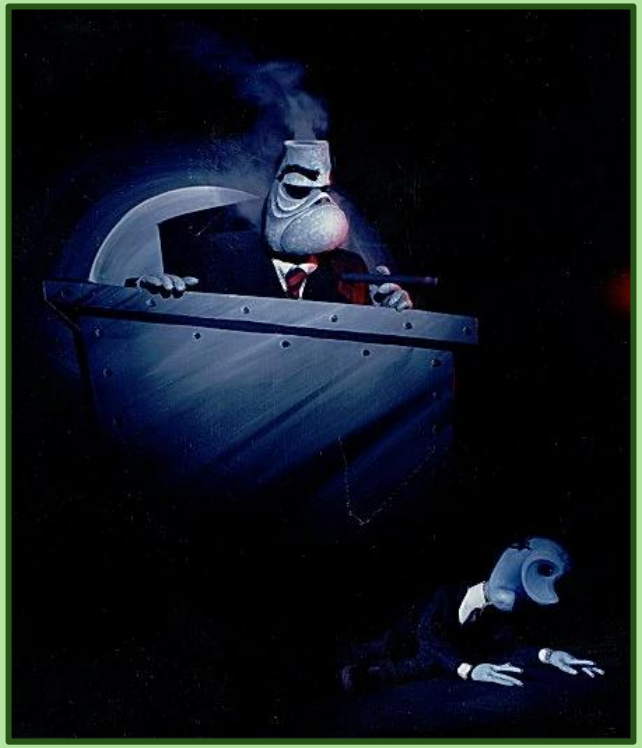
The movie ends with Zero running and shouting 'Hope come back' which feels very effective and quite emotional.



(Modcinema, Year Unknown)

Adaptations of the Play:

Hystopolis Puppet Theatre (1992)

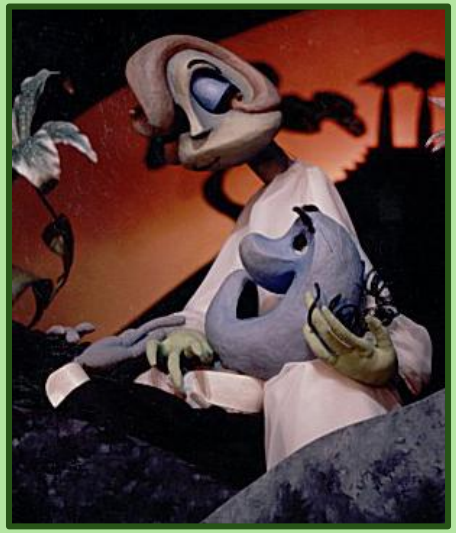


Directed by Michael Schwabe and designed by members of the ensemble.

Drake's (2022) review also led me to the Hystopolis Puppet Theatre adaptation in 1992. This production was done in the Bunraku style, which are traditional Japanese wooden puppets, operated by three people who are dressed in black so as to be invisible. This adaptation is highly acclaimed and was very successful. *(Henson Festival, Year Unknown)*

This adaptation is my personal favourite as it's the only one that leans into the Expressionism, and especially the German Expressionism of the play. I love the use of dramatic shadows to isolate characters and create tension and fear.

All images found at Puppet Wiki (Year Unknown)





Reviews:

When it was first published in 1923, The Adding Machine was well received by critics. Franklin Pierce Adams describes it as "deeply interesting" and Heywood Broun states, "expressionism has come over the footlights.." and become "an effective theatrical device." The general public didn't like it as much. *(Simkin, 2020)*

Metropolis:

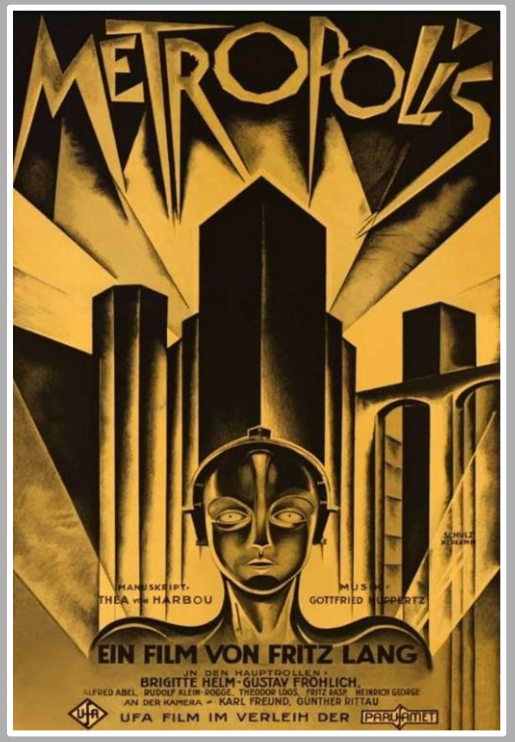


(Bliss from Bygone Days, 2020)

Directed by **Fritz Lang**, Metropolis was released in **1927** and designed by **Otto Hunte, Erich Kettelhut, and Karl Vollbrecht**.*(IMDb, Year Unknown)*. Metropolis was a significant film for the German Expressionist movement, exploring experimental camera angles to escalate emotion. Filming lasted over 17 months, and 500-600 skyscraper models were created *(Jay's Classic Movie Blog, 2022)*.

Summary:

Metropolis follows the spoiled son of a rich man controlling the city. He discovers that down below workers are being exploited and kept in dangerous conditions, the workflow never ending, in order to keep the city above alive. Determined to put a stop to this, he experiences life as a worker and falls in love with the leader of a rebel group who want to be free. Meanwhile a scientist invents a robot, and the rich man chooses this woman to be the soul that inhabits it. It all goes wrong as the robot causes chaos and mischief wherever she goes, flooding the city above.



(IMDb, Year Unknown)

(Lucarelli, 2012)



I really enjoyed this movie and have wanted to watch it for years, I was happily surprised as the storyline was completely different to what I was expecting and I loved the exaggerated acting style, along with the new '80s synth soundtrack.

I think the sets were the most impressive part of Metropolis, the scale created (whether through models or real life) enhanced the intimidation and fear instilled in the workers. The heavy machinery towering over them creates an atmosphere of pressure and claustrophobia. In comparison to The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, I think the editing was more interesting in Metropolis, using montages to create the idea of a fever dream. It would be really interesting to incorporate some of the techniques used here in order to capture the world Mr. Zero works in, as it seems vaguely similar with clones of people working everyday, even in their death.

Nosferatu:



(IMDb, Year Unknown)

Directed by F. W. Murnau, Nosferatu was released in 1922, with Albin Grau as the Set Designer *(IMDb, Year Unknown)*. Having been released quite soon after The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Nosferatu was another key film in the German Expressionism movement. Significant for being the first vampire film also. Murnau avoided many Expressionist techniques at the beginning of the film, in order to emphasise Count Orlok's castle and the overwhelming ominous presence. *(Dacumos, 2025)*



(IMDb, Year Unknown)

Summary:

The story follows the same as Bram Stoker's Dracula. A real estate agent is sent to a distant and suspicious castle where he finds an old and peculiar man, Count Orlok, who only comes out at night. He discovers the man is a vampire, or a monster as far as he is aware, and flees. Meanwhile Count Orlok sets off to the main character's home, as he has purchased the house nearby and intends to find the man's wife. In a race to get there before Orlok, the man finally makes it home. But so does Count Orlok.

(IMDb, Year Unknown)



I found this movie the least expressionist out of the ones we've watched together so far, I know that's intended to emphasise the reveal of Count Orlok and his castle. I think there was a great use of shadows and chiaroscuro lighting, but I wish the sets themselves had been more adventurous. *(Bilson, 2010)* →

I really enjoyed Nosferatu but found a lot of it more comedic than scary, due to the time it was made compared to horror movies nowadays. I love the classic Dracula story and so I felt it was really effective to see a German Expressionist adaptation of that and that this style fits that story incredibly well.



Frankenweenie:

Directed by Tim Burton, Frankenweenie was released in 2012. The Production Designer was Rick Heinrichs *(IMDb, Year Unknown)*. Throughout his career, Tim Burton has been influenced and inspired by German Expressionism, many, if not all, of Burton's work fit this style of exaggerated angles, gothic stories, and haunting themes. *(Yamout, 2018)*

I can see how this film could be an example of the German Expressionist influence in modern day animation films.





(Scheib, Year Unknown)
←

Summary:

The story is similar to Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley. A boy, who's incredibly close with his dog, is devastated when the dog dies. With a science fair at his school coming up, he decides to raise his dog from the dead with an idea he had involving lightning. It works and soon all of his classmates are doing it too, in order to win the prize. Except everyone else's experiments go wrong. It is revealed the dog only came back successfully as it was done out of pure love.

(Disney, Year Unknown)

I always love Burton's animation style, as he exaggerates and distorts the world and people in an extremely expressionist way. This specific film's use of black and white emphasises the light used in certain scenes, which is great for the drama of the lightning and the experiment, almost reminding you of Metropolis. I also liked the shadows on people's faces through curtains.

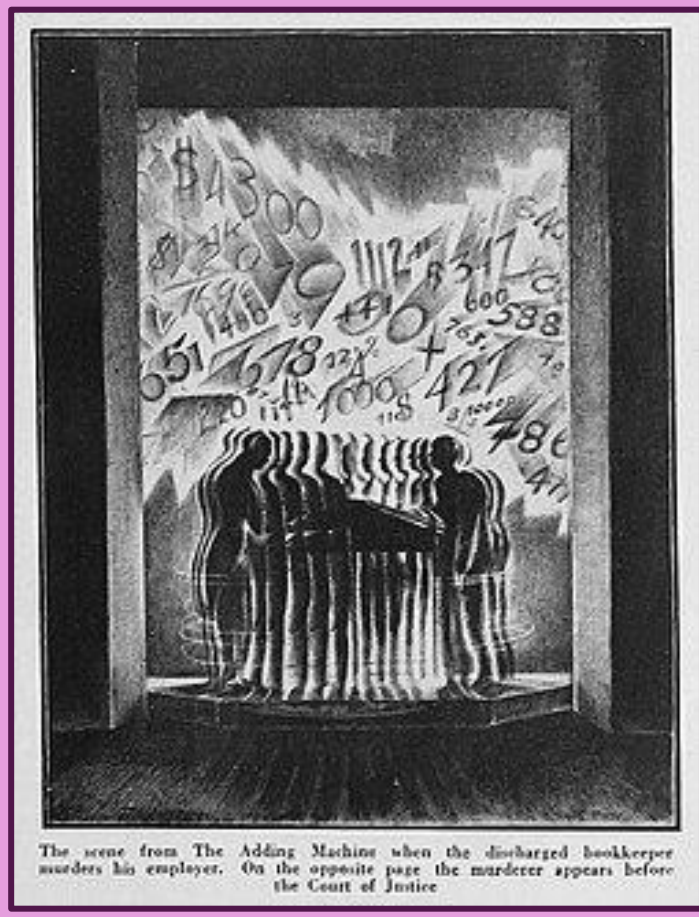


(Wikipedia, 2025)

I wasn't a fan of this film. I love Tim Burton movies, specifically Corpse Bride, Edward Scissorhands, and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. But Frankenweenie wasn't that interesting, and I feel like it's not his best work, although the black and white style was a great choice and gave it a unique atmosphere for an animation.

How The Adding Machine links to German Expressionism:

(Henry, 1923) →



The scene from The Adding Machine when the discharged bookkeeper murders his employer. On the opposite page the murderer appears before the Court of Justice

The Adding Machine (1923) is considered one of the first American Expressionist plays.
This is due to the way Rice portrays characters who are dealing with alienation and emotional turmoil, as well as an exaggerated psychological reaction to this.
As well as an exaggerated reality of a mechanised world, exploring a dystopia of technology.
Rice creates fragmented scenes and locations which are unrealistic and impossible, for example, the large cage. *(Bahr, 2024)*

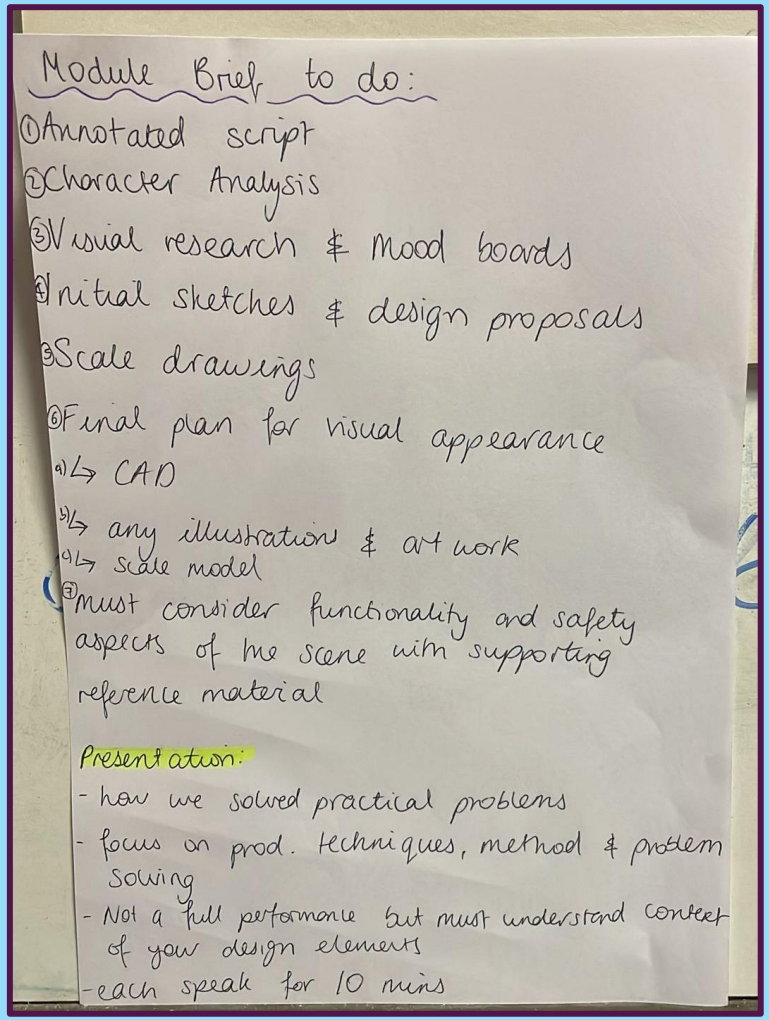


← *(Lyons, 2020)*

I personally think The Adding Machine connects to German Expressionism through its critique of society, conformity, and capitalism through the exploration of the psychological states of individuals that have to experience the downsides of a world that serves only one group of people. Rice takes it to the extreme to express his concerns and beliefs, and the style of German Expressionism would be perfect to take this further and make it more impactful for audiences.

Groups:

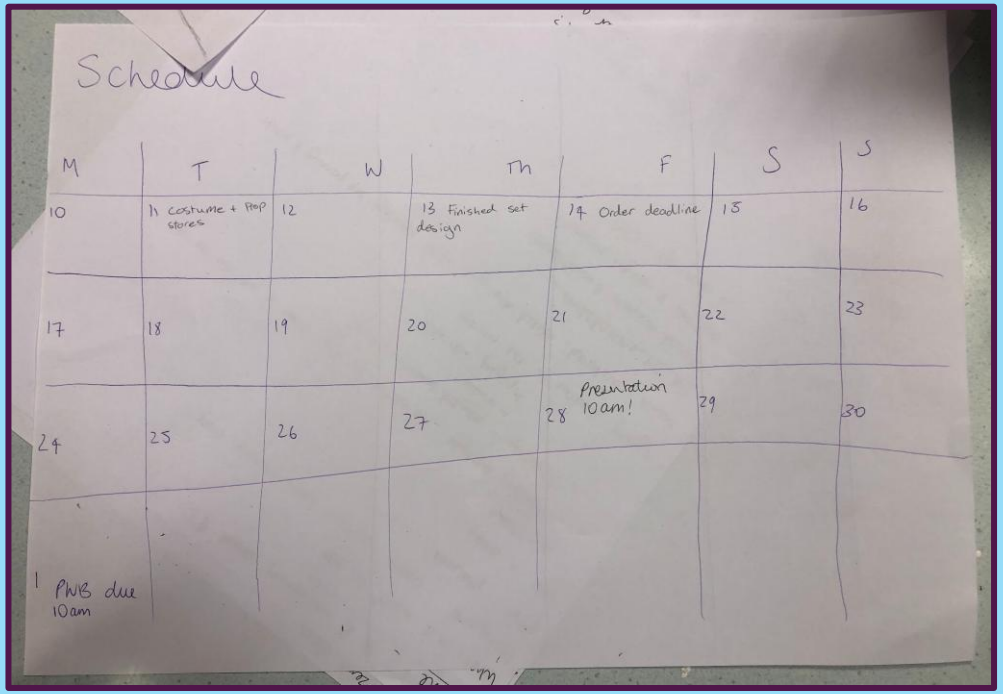
For this project, I am in a group with Alice, Charlie, Anne, and Annie!
We have a £150 budget, our presentation space is the black box room in the Halliwell, and we decided to not have specific production roles but instead share a mixture of the work.
I know I'm specifically interested in working on the sound and scenic art for this project, as I want to refresh my Q-Lab skills, whilst still maintaining my CAD skills, and to develop my drawing and design process.



We began by discussing the play as a whole, exploring specific scenes we find interesting and our first thoughts on what we could create and focus on within the script.

In this first meeting we also made a rough schedule, including the final presentation date, the deadline for ordering materials, and various other checkpoints. We left the rest blank for when we had more of an idea of what we were making.

We then made a poster checklist of everything listed in the module brief, having completed the analysis with the class, we knew with the timeline given we would need to fast track the design decision process.



Initial Ideas:

Our first thoughts of the play included:
→ spinning at end of scene 2, great soundscape and lighting potential, intensity
→ office itself is interesting, tall desks and stools can be a good connection to German Expressionism
→ Elysian fields horror version, a giant Venus flytrap
→ court scene has a lot of wiggle room and a lot of exaggeration to it
→ Not interested in scene 1, 3, 5, and 6 due to various complications and technicalities



(Brownlee, 2013)

We then went into more depth on a few scenes →

Scene 2: Office
Liked the end of the scene more than the beginning.
Exaggerated high desks and stools mimicking Dr Caligari.
Could begin with the whistle blowing for the end of work, the scene plays out from there.
Camera could spin if we were recording it.
Projector used to show the world spinning whilst real actors are still.
Beginning of Shrek - treadmill backdrop - to physically create the spinning.
Use of shadows to present the murder, linking to Nosferatu.

We also liked the idea of looking into black and white film colour theory, an example shown in the top left image of a colourised version of the Addam's Family. I also showed the group a short clip of a satirical expressionist film from 'The Mighty Boosh', linked next to the picture, to give an example of the atmosphere I imagined.



(IMDb, Year Unknown)

Scene 4: Court Trial
Play with a layered soundscape of Mr. Zero speaking over a recording of himself as he loses his mind
Distort the size of the furniture - Play That Goes Wrong style
Jury could be puppets or not there and replaced by sound

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAlxNNvfvJs

(BBC Studios, 2008)



Initial Ideas:

Scene 7: Elysian Fields
Giant plants, gothic fields, carnivorous plants
Little shop of horrors
Charlie and the chocolate factory - Tim Burton
Greek mythology

*not as many ideas for this as we thought, feels quite bland and empty, not much to work with

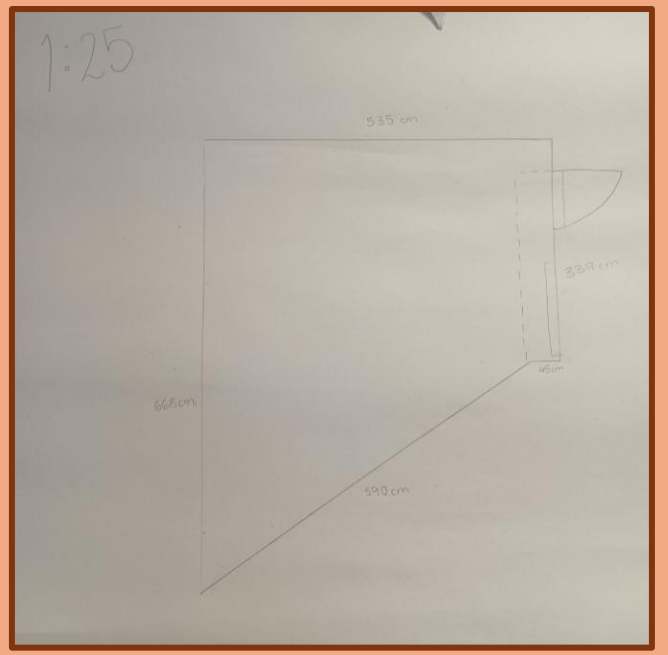
Scene 8: Afterlife office
Adding machine itself - it could be like a puppet, as if it's coming alive
Zero has merged into the adding machine
Filling the room with paper, one ribbon
Never ending tights, never see the end of them
Robe made of paper

Choices narrowed down to Scene 2 and 8
→ after discussions with the other group to ensure we didn't pick the same scene, we chose Scene 2!

(Puppet Wiki, Year Unknown)



After visiting the space and dividing it into two, we chose the space furthest from the door and measured it out.
Creating a 1:25 scale drawing of the floorplan to put up in our design space.
This was drawn by Annie Picton.



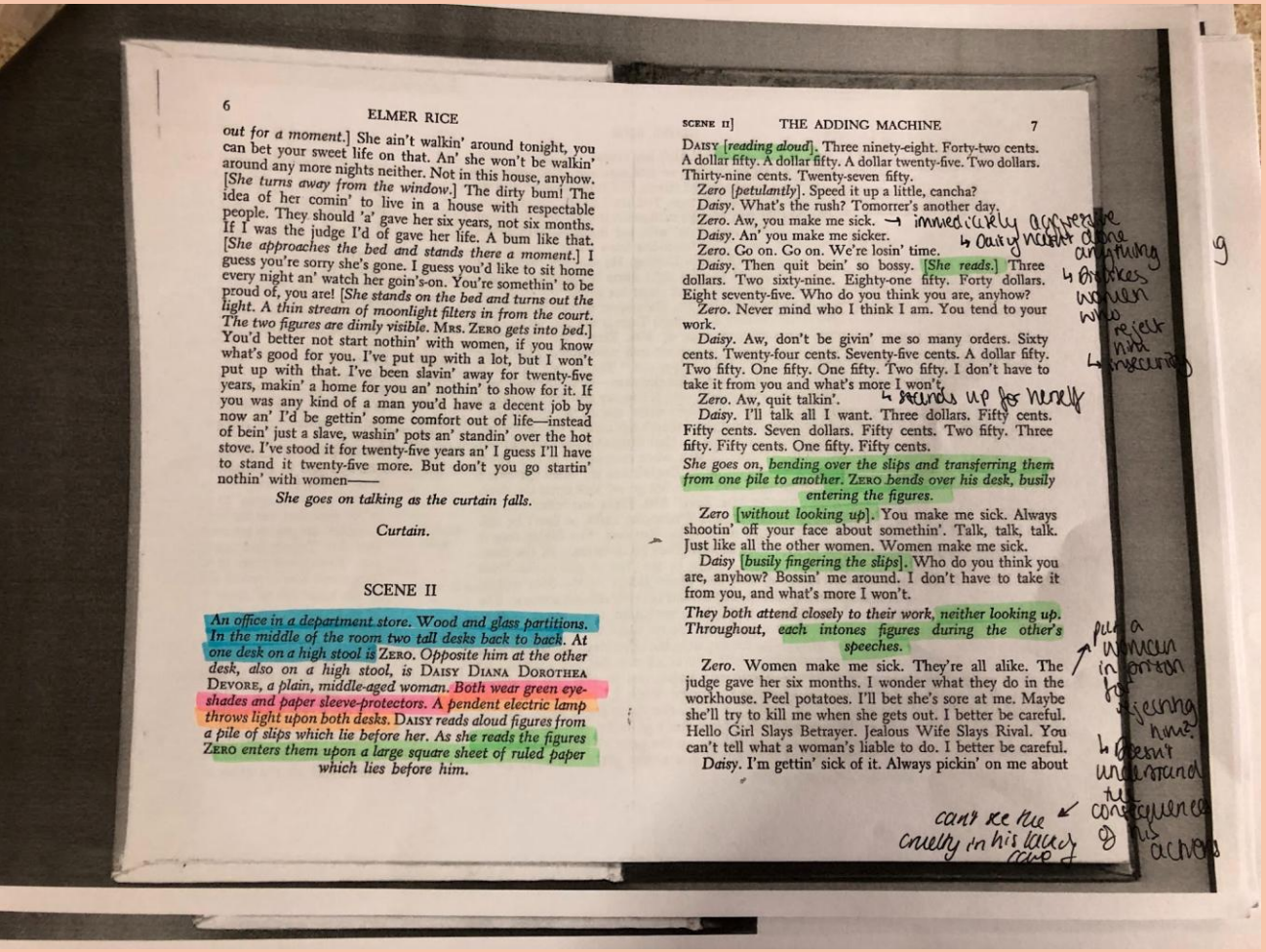
Read Through of Scene 2 as a Group:

During the read through I took notes of all the stage directions, including the sound and lighting cues. All the highlighted pieces are the blocking details, which we later used to help us create a storyboard. This also helped me create a soundscape later on. We decided we would go from the whistle blow up to the end of the scene.

Stage Directions and Blocking:

→ Office in a department store
→ wood and glass partitions
→ centre of the room, two tall desks back to back, two tall stools behind the desks facing each other
→ 2 sets of green eye shades and sleeve protectors
→ pendant electric lamp, switched on
→ pile of slips with figures on it, Daisy's desk, multiple piles (she moves one pile to the other)
→ large square sheet of ruled paper on Zero's desk, he also has a pen to write with and an eraser to correct his mistakes
→ both bending over their desks whilst they work, Daisy reads, Zero writes
→ Zero talks without looking up 'you make me sick'
→ Daisy fingers the slips, 'who do you think you are'
→ they both work without looking up, one intones figures whilst the other talks
→ Zero glances up quickly and bends over again 'she didn't have nothing on that time but a shirt'
→ Zero looks up and clears his throat, Daisy is startled, 'whadja say?'
→ bend over their work again
→ looks up to ask 'didn't you say eighty-seven dollars'
→ daisy looks up to respond, consults her slips
→ zero uses his eraser to correct the mistake
→ Zero looks up to say slow down, Daisy looks up to respond
→ sudden shrill blast of steam whistle, Daisy and Zero speak in unison
→ get off their stools with agility, remove sleeve protectors and eye shades
→ both get a hat from behind the desk
→ Daisy puts on her hat, turns to Zero, sighs and leaves through door at left
→ Zero is cleaning his pen, looks up to say Goodnight
→ Zero picks up his hat and goes towards left door, Boss enters through right door and calls out to him
→ Zero turns, surprised, trembles
→ fumbles his hat, picks it up, recovers, approaches quivering
→ Zero has a nervous grin, Boss is staring at him, 'Oh, have you?'
→ Zero stares at him, 'Addin Machines?', makes motion of keys and handle to pull
→ soft music begins, mechanical player of a merry-go-round.
→ part of floor with desk and stools begins to rotate slowly
→music becomes louder, gradually, spinning gets faster
→ Boss is barely heard as music increases
→ Boss is no longer heard, platform spins rapidly now, Zero and Boss face each other motionless, Boss's jaw is moving as if he is speaking
→ music swells, sound effects begin: wind, waves, galloping horses, locomotive whistle, sleigh bells, automobile siren, glass crash, New Years Eve, Election Night, Armistice Day, Mardi Gras
→ noise now deafening, culminates in thunder
→ flash of red immediately after, then blackout
→ curtain falls

Annotated Script:



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out for a moment.] She ain't walkin' around tonight, you can bet your sweet life on that. An' she won't be walkin' around any more nights neither. Not in this house, anyhow. [*She turns away from the window.*] The dirty bum! The idea of her comin' to live in a house with respectable people. They should 'a' gave her six years, not six months. If I was the judge I'd of gave her life. A bum like that. [*She approaches the bed and stands there a moment.*] I guess you're sorry she's gone. I guess you'd like to sit home every night an' watch her goin's-on. You're somethin' to be proud of, you are! [*She stands on the bed and turns out the light. A thin stream of moonlight filters in from the court. The two figures are dimly visible.* MRS. ZERO *gets into bed.*] You'd better not start nothin' with women, if you know what's good for you. I've put up with a lot, but I won't put up with that. I've been slavin' away for twenty-five years, makin' a home for you an' nothin' to show for it. If you was any kind of a man you'd have a decent job by now an' I'd be gettin' some comfort out of life—instead of bein' just a slave, washin' pots an' standin' over the hot stove. I've stood it for twenty-five years an' I guess I'll have to stand it twenty-five more. But don't you go startin' nothin' with women——

She goes on talking as the curtain falls.

Curtain.

SCENE II

An office in a department store. Wood and glass partitions. In the middle of the room two tall desks back to back. At one desk on a high stool is ZERO. *Opposite him at the other desk, also on a high stool, is* DAISY DIANA DOROTHEA DEVORE, *a plain, middle-aged woman. Both wear green eye-shades and paper sleeve-protectors. A pendent electric lamp throws light upon both desks.* DAISY *reads aloud figures from a pile of slips which lie before her. As she reads the figures* ZERO *enters them upon a large square sheet of ruled paper which lies before him.*

SCENE II] THE ADDING MACHINE 7

DAISY [*reading aloud*]. Three ninety-eight. Forty-two cents. A dollar fifty. A dollar fifty. A dollar twenty-five. Two dollars. Thirty-nine cents. Twenty-seven fifty.

Zero [*petulantly*]. Speed it up a little, cancha?

Daisy. What's the rush? Tomorrer's another day.

Zero. Aw, you make me sick.

Daisy. An' you make me sicker.

Zero. Go on. Go on. We're losin' time.

Daisy. Then quit bein' so bossy. [*She reads.*] Three dollars. Two sixty-nine. Eighty-one fifty. Forty dollars. Eight seventy-five. Who do you think you are, anyhow?

Zero. Never mind who I think I am. You tend to your work.

Daisy. Aw, don't be givin' me so many orders. Sixty cents. Twenty-four cents. Seventy-five cents. A dollar fifty. Two fifty. One fifty. One fifty. Two fifty. I don't have to take it from you and what's more I won't.

Zero. Aw, quit talkin'.

Daisy. I'll talk all I want. Three dollars. Fifty cents. Fifty cents. Seven dollars. Fifty cents. Two fifty. Three fifty. Fifty cents. One fifty. Fifty cents.

She goes on, bending over the slips and transferring them from one pile to another. ZERO *bends over his desk, busily entering the figures.*

Zero [*without looking up*]. You make me sick. Always shootin' off your face about somethin'. Talk, talk, talk. Just like all the other women. Women make me sick.

Daisy [*busily fingering the slips*]. Who do you think you are, anyhow? Bossin' me around. I don't have to take it from you, and what's more I won't.

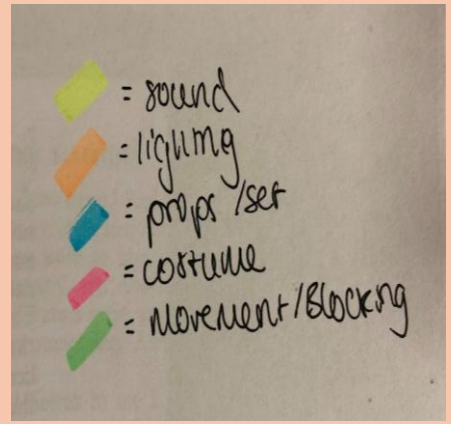
They both attend closely to their work, neither looking up. Throughout, each intones figures during the other's speeches.

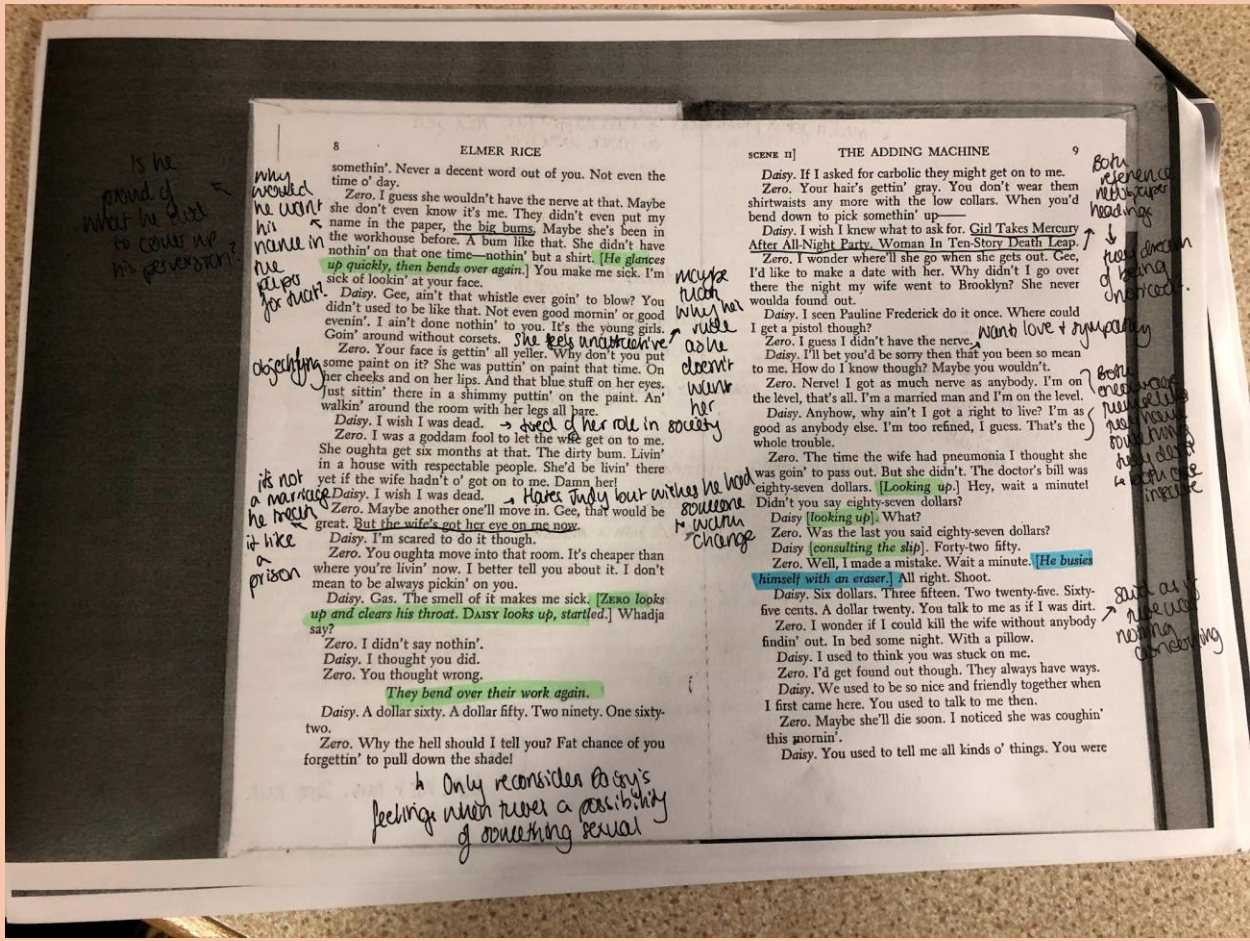
Zero. Women make me sick. They're all alike. The judge gave her six months. I wonder what they do in the workhouse. Peel potatoes. I'll bet she's sore at me. Maybe she'll try to kill me when she gets out. I better be careful. Hello Girl Slays Betrayer. Jealous Wife Slays Rival. You can't tell what a woman's liable to do. I better be careful.

Daisy. I'm gettin' sick of it. Always pickin' on me about

I found there was no costume descriptions in this scene and a lot of blocking used to create tension between the two, as they're thinking the opposite of how they're acting towards each other.

After receiving the physical scripts, I was able to annotate my script, focussing the most on Scene 2 as that was the scene we chose to work on.
To the right is the key I created to highlight different production aspects.





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somethin'. Never a decent word out of you. Not even the time o' day.

Zero. I guess she wouldn't have the nerve at that. Maybe she don't even know it's me. They didn't even put my name in the paper, the big bums. Maybe she's been in the workhouse before. A bum like that. She didn't have nothin' on that one time—nothin' but a shirt. [*He glances up quickly, then bends over again.*] You make me sick. I'm sick of lookin' at your face.

Daisy. Gee, ain't that whistle ever goin' to blow? You didn't used to be like that. Not even good mornin' or good evenin'. I ain't done nothin' to you. It's the young girls. Goin' around without corsets.

Zero. Your face is gettin' all yeller. Why don't you put some paint on it? She was puttin' on paint that time. On her cheeks and on her lips. And that blue stuff on her eyes. Just sittin' there in a shimmy puttin' on the paint. An' walkin' around the room with her legs all bare.

Daisy. I wish I was dead.

Zero. I was a goddam fool to let the wife get on to me. She oughta get six months at that. The dirty bum. Livin' in a house with respectable people. She'd be livin' there yet if the wife hadn't o' got on to me. Damn her!

Daisy. I wish I was dead.

Zero. Maybe another one'll move in. Gee, that would be great. But the wife's got her eye on me now.

Daisy. I'm scared to do it though.

Zero. You oughta move into that room. It's cheaper than where you're livin' now. I better tell you about it. I don't mean to be always pickin' on you.

Daisy. Gas. The smell of it makes me sick. [ZERO *looks up and clears his throat.* DAISY *looks up, startled.*] Whadja say?

Zero. I didn't say nothin'.

Daisy. I thought you did.

Zero. You thought wrong.

They bend over their work again.

Daisy. A dollar sixty. A dollar fifty. Two ninety. One sixty-two.

Zero. Why the hell should I tell you? Fat chance of you forgettin' to pull down the shade!

SCENE II] THE ADDING MACHINE 9

Daisy. If I asked for carbolic they might get on to me.

Zero. Your hair's gettin' gray. You don't wear them shirtwaists any more with the low collars. When you'd bend down to pick somethin' up——

Daisy. I wish I knew what to ask for. Girl Takes Mercury After All-Night Party. Woman In Ten-Story Death Leap.

Zero. I wonder where'll she go when she gets out. Gee, I'd like to make a date with her. Why didn't I go over there the night my wife went to Brooklyn? She never woulda found out.

Daisy. I seen Pauline Frederick do it once. Where could I get a pistol though?

Zero. I guess I didn't have the nerve.

Daisy. I'll bet you'd be sorry then that you been so mean to me. How do I know though? Maybe you wouldn't.

Zero. Nerve! I got as much nerve as anybody. I'm on the level, that's all. I'm a married man and I'm on the level.

Daisy. Anyhow, why ain't I got a right to live? I'm as good as anybody else. I'm too refined, I guess. That's the whole trouble.

Zero. The time the wife had pneumonia I thought she was goin' to pass out. But she didn't. The doctor's bill was eighty-seven dollars. [*Looking up.*] Hey, wait a minute! Didn't you say eighty-seven dollars?

Daisy [*looking up*]. What?

Zero. Was the last you said eighty-seven dollars?

Daisy [*consulting the slip*]. Forty-two fifty.

Zero. Well, I made a mistake. Wait a minute. [*He busies himself with an eraser.*] All right. Shoot.

Daisy. Six dollars. Three fifteen. Two twenty-five. Sixty-five cents. A dollar twenty. You talk to me as if I was dirt.

Zero. I wonder if I could kill the wife without anybody findin' out. In bed some night. With a pillow.

Daisy. I used to think you was stuck on me.

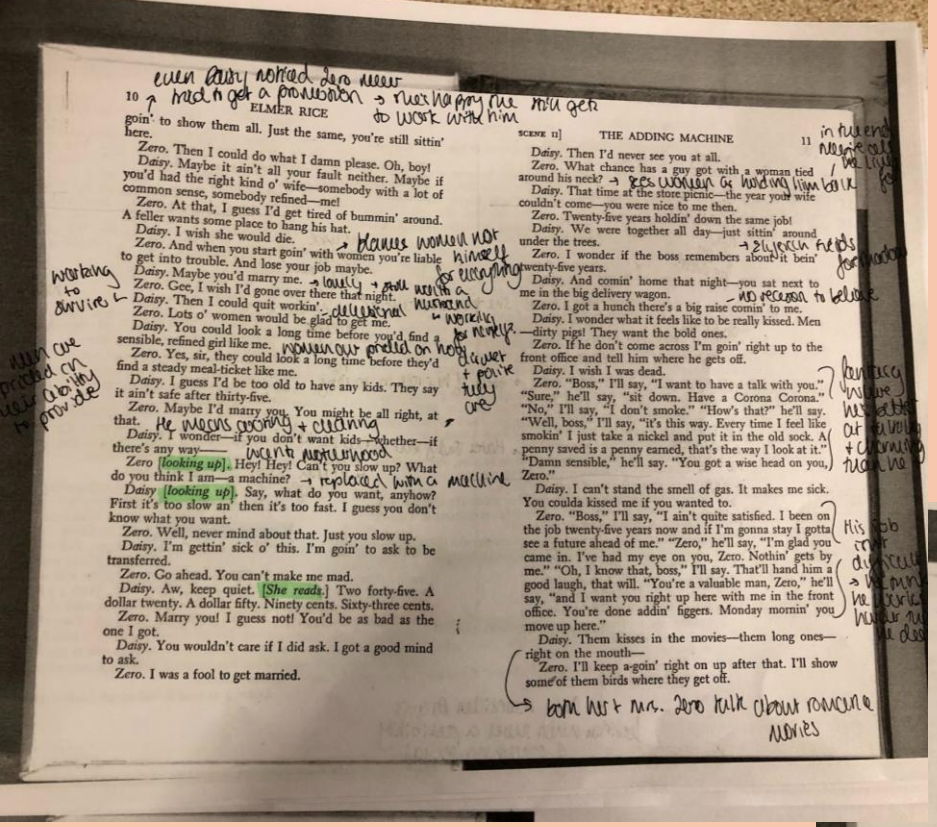
Zero. I'd get found out though. They always have ways.

Daisy. We used to be so nice and friendly together when I first came here. You used to talk to me then.

Zero. Maybe she'll die soon. I noticed she was coughin' this mornin'.

Daisy. You used to tell me all kinds o' things. You were

I also found some foreshadowing that I hadn't noticed before, such as Daisy remembering sitting under the tree all day at the picnic, and then at the end Daisy wants to stay in the Elysian Fields under a tree with him forever.



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goin' to show them all. Just the same, you're still sittin' here.

Zero. Then I could do what I damn please. Oh, boy!

Daisy. Maybe it ain't all your fault neither. Maybe if you'd had the right kind o' wife—somebody with a lot of common sense, somebody refined—me!

Zero. At that, I guess I'd get tired of bummin' around. A feller wants some place to hang his hat.

Daisy. I wish she would die.

Zero. And when you start goin' with women you're liable to get into trouble. And lose your job maybe.

Daisy. Maybe you'd marry me.

Zero. Gee, I wish I'd gone over there that night.

Daisy. Then I could quit workin'.

Zero. Lots o' women would be glad to get me.

Daisy. You could look a long time before you'd find a sensible, refined girl like me.

Zero. Yes, sir, they could look a long time before they'd find a steady meal-ticket like me.

Daisy. I guess I'd be too old to have any kids. They say it ain't safe after thirty-five.

Zero. Maybe I'd marry you. You might be all right, at that.

Daisy. I wonder—if you don't want kids—whether—if there's any way——

Zero [looking up]. Hey! Hey! Can't you slow up? What do you think I am—a machine?

Daisy [looking up]. Say, what do you want, anyhow? First it's too slow an' then it's too fast. I guess you don't know what you want.

Zero. Well, never mind about that. Just you slow up.

Daisy. I'm gettin' sick o' this. I'm goin' to ask to be transferred.

Zero. Go ahead. You can't make me mad.

Daisy. Aw, keep quiet. *[She reads.]* Two forty-five. A dollar twenty. A dollar fifty. Ninety cents. Sixty-three cents.

Zero. Marry you! I guess not! You'd be as bad as the one I got.

Daisy. You wouldn't care if I did ask. I got a good mind to ask.

Zero. I was a fool to get married.

SCENE II] THE ADDING MACHINE 11

Daisy. Then I'd never see you at all.

Zero. What chance has a guy got with a woman tied around his neck?

Daisy. That time at the store picnic—the year your wife couldn't come—you were nice to me then.

Zero. Twenty-five years holdin' down the same job!

Daisy. We were together all day—just sittin' around under the trees.

Zero. I wonder if the boss remembers about it bein' twenty-five years.

Daisy. And comin' home that night—you sat next to me in the big delivery wagon.

Zero. I got a hunch there's a big raise comin' to me.

Daisy. I wonder what it feels like to be really kissed. Men—dirty pigs! They want the bold ones.

Zero. If he don't come across I'm goin' right up to the front office and tell him where he gets off.

Daisy. I wish I was dead.

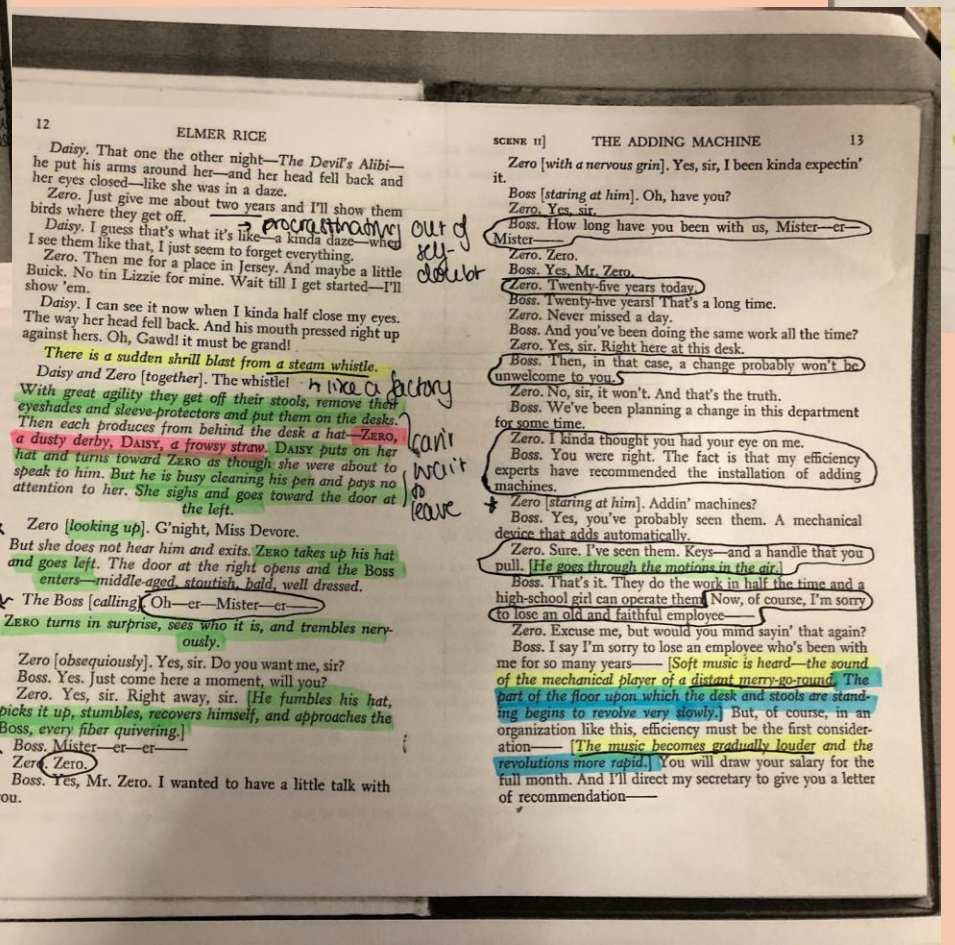
Zero. "Boss," I'll say, "I want to have a talk with you." "Sure," he'll say, "sit down. Have a Corona Corona." "No," I'll say, "I don't smoke." "How's that?" he'll say. "Well, boss," I'll say, "it's this way. Every time I feel like smokin' I just take a nickel and put it in the old sock. A penny saved is a penny earned, that's the way I look at it." "Damn sensible," he'll say. "You got a wise head on you, Zero."

Daisy. I can't stand the smell of gas. It makes me sick. You coulda kissed me if you wanted to.

Zero. "Boss," I'll say, "I ain't quite satisfied. I been on the job twenty-five years now and if I'm gonna stay I gotta see a future ahead of me." "Zero," he'll say, "I'm glad you came in. I've had my eye on you, Zero. Nothin' gets by me." "Oh, I know that, boss," I'll say. That'll hand him a good laugh, that will. "You're a valuable man, Zero," he'll say, "and I want you right up here with me in the front office. You're done addin' figgers. Monday mornin' you move up here."

Daisy. Them kisses in the movies—them long ones—right on the mouth—

Zero. I'll keep a-goin' right on up after that. I'll show some of them birds where they get off.



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Daisy. That one the other night—*The Devil's Alibi*—he put his arms around her—and her head fell back and her eyes closed—like she was in a daze.

Zero. Just give me about two years and I'll show them birds where they get off.

Daisy. I guess that's what it's like—a kinda daze—when I see them like that, I just seem to forget everything.

Zero. Then me for a place in Jersey. And maybe a little Buick. No tin Lizzie for mine. Wait till I get started—I'll show 'em.

Daisy. I can see it now when I kinda half close my eyes. The way her head fell back. And his mouth pressed right up against hers. Oh, Gawd! it must be grand!

There is a sudden shrill blast from a steam whistle.

Daisy and Zero [together]. The whistle!

*With great agility they get off their stools, remove their eyeshades and sleeve-protectors and put them on the desks. Then each produces from behind the desk a hat—*ZERO, *a dusty derby,* DAISY, *a frowsy straw.* DAISY *puts on her hat and turns toward* ZERO *as though she were about to speak to him. But he is busy cleaning his pen and pays no attention to her. She sighs and goes toward the door at the left.*

Zero [looking up]. G'night, Miss Devore.

But she does not hear him and exits. ZERO *takes up his hat and goes left. The door at the right opens and the Boss enters—middle-aged, stoutish, bald, well dressed.*

The Boss [calling]. Oh—er—Mister—er——

ZERO *turns in surprise, sees who it is, and trembles nervously.*

Zero [obsequiously]. Yes, sir. Do you want me, sir?

Boss. Yes. Just come here a moment, will you?

Zero. Yes, sir. Right away, sir. *[He fumbles his hat, picks it up, stumbles, recovers himself, and approaches the Boss, every fiber quivering.]*

Boss. Mister—er—er——

Zero. Zero.

Boss. Yes, Mr. Zero. I wanted to have a little talk with you.

SCENE II] THE ADDING MACHINE 13

Zero [with a nervous grin]. Yes, sir, I been kinda expectin' it.

Boss [staring at him]. Oh, have you?

Zero. Yes, sir.

Boss. How long have you been with us, Mister—er—Mister——

Zero. Zero.

Boss. Yes, Mr. Zero.

Zero. Twenty-five years today.

Boss. Twenty-five years! That's a long time.

Zero. Never missed a day.

Boss. And you've been doing the same work all the time?

Zero. Yes, sir. Right here at this desk.

Boss. Then, in that case, a change probably won't be unwelcome to you.

Zero. No, sir, it won't. And that's the truth.

Boss. We've been planning a change in this department for some time.

Zero. I kinda thought you had your eye on me.

Boss. You were right. The fact is that my efficiency experts have recommended the installation of adding machines.

Zero [staring at him]. Addin' machines?

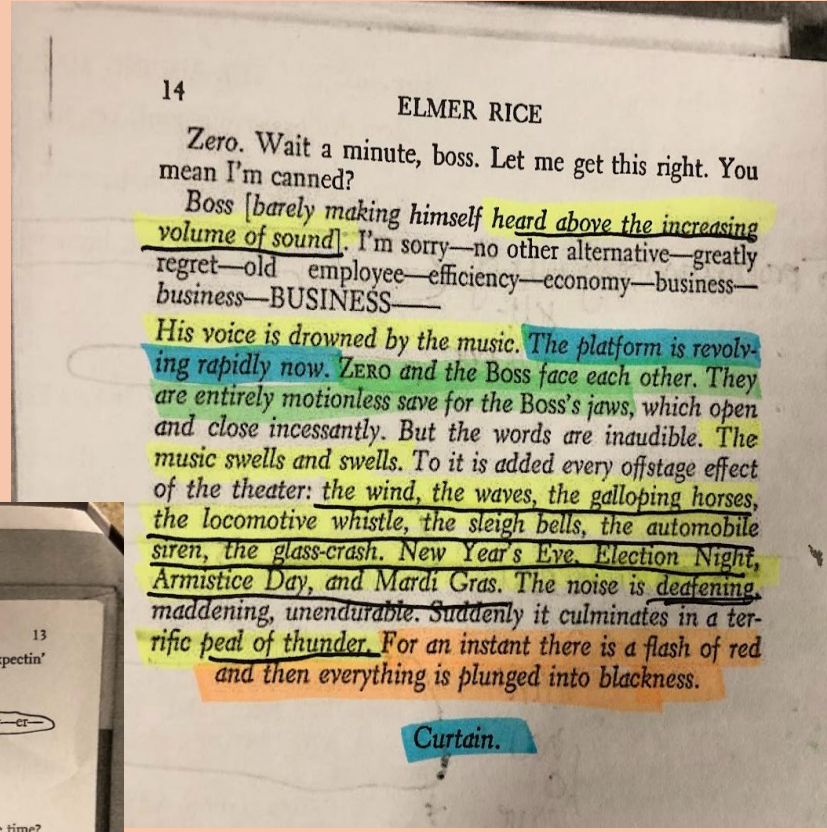
Boss. Yes, you've probably seen them. A mechanical device that adds automatically.

Zero. Sure. I've seen them. Keys—and a handle that you pull. *[He goes through the motions in the air.]*

Boss. That's it. They do the work in half the time and a high-school girl can operate them. Now, of course, I'm sorry to lose an old and faithful employee——

Zero. Excuse me, but would you mind sayin' that again?

Boss. I say I'm sorry to lose an employee who's been with me for so many years—— *[Soft music is heard—the sound of the mechanical player of a distant merry-go-round. The part of the floor upon which the desk and stools are standing begins to revolve very slowly.]* But, of course, in an organization like this, efficiency must be the first consideration—— *[The music becomes gradually louder and the revolutions more rapid.]* You will draw your salary for the full month. And I'll direct my secretary to give you a letter of recommendation——



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Zero. Wait a minute, boss. Let me get this right. You mean I'm canned?

Boss [barely making himself heard above the increasing volume of sound]. I'm sorry—no other alternative—greatly regret—old employee—efficiency—economy—business—business—BUSINESS——

His voice is drowned by the music. The platform is revolving rapidly now. ZERO *and the Boss face each other. They are entirely motionless save for the Boss's jaws, which open and close incessantly. But the words are inaudible. The music swells and swells. To it is added every offstage effect of the theater: the wind, the waves, the galloping horses, the locomotive whistle, the sleigh bells, the automobile siren, the glass-crash. New Year's Eve. Election Night, Armistice Day, and Mardi Gras. The noise is deafening, maddening, unendurable. Suddenly it culminates in a terrific peal of thunder. For an instant there is a flash of red and then everything is plunged into blackness.*

Curtain.

In this scene, you can see the ideals pushed of women being valued for how refined, polite, and composed they are, whilst men are valued on how much they can provide for a family. This is seen through their internal dialogues, when they boast about how anyone would be lucky to have them.

All of the sound cues are at the end of the scene, culminating in an overwhelming and panic-inducing environment.

Mood Boards: General Aesthetic

We have kept everything monochrome as we wanted to film our piece in black and white.



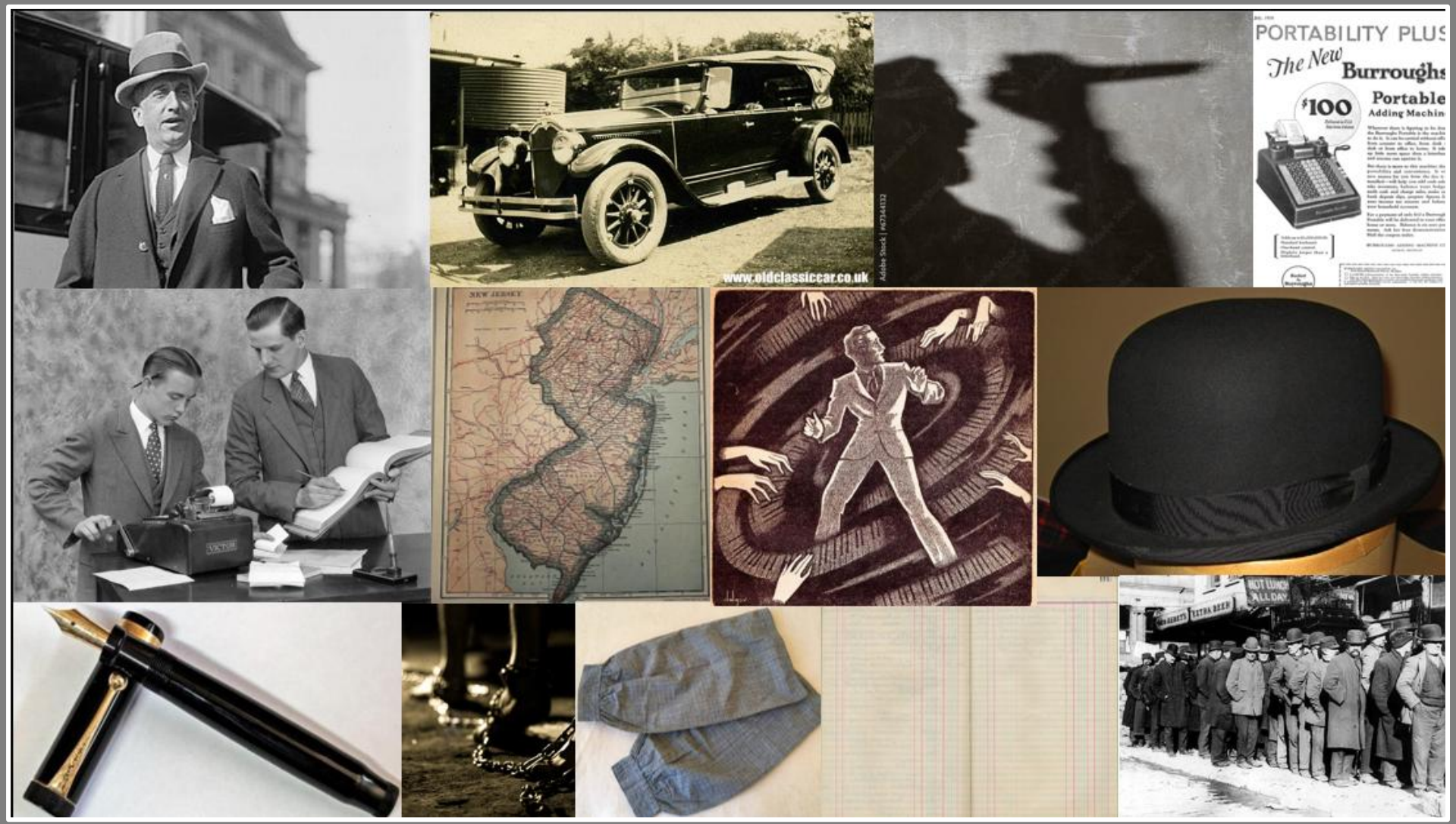
We included a lot of images from The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, we loved the high stools and desks which made the characters hunch over their desks awkwardly, it created an uncomfortable working atmosphere that we felt perfectly fit the office in this world.

We also took inspiration from Metropolis and the idea of an overwhelming capitalist system overshadowing everyone's lives.

Welsh (2024), Le Deco Style (2016), Silent-ology (2014), Shah (Year Unknown), Wider Screen Blogs (2018), Monovisions (2025), Smilebooth (2025), Diymomy (2012), Shutterstock (Year Unknown)

Mood Boards: Mr. Zero

We were interested in using shadows to suggest the murder at the end of the scene- similar to Nosferatu

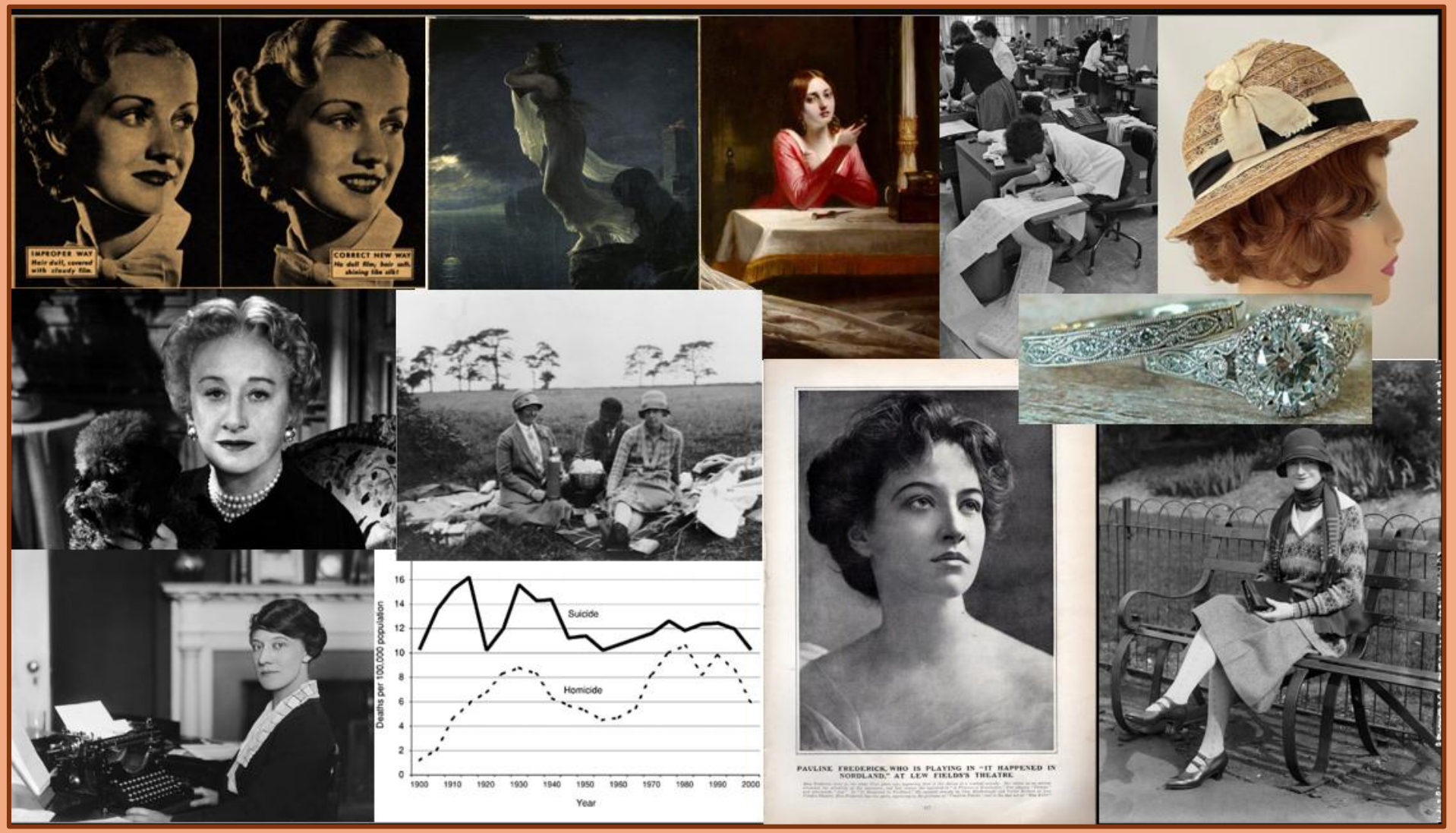


For Mr. Zero's mood board we looked into men's fashion at the time and the type of hat he would have worn.

We also looked at sleeve protectors to help with our prop and costume hunting.

Lovemoney (2024), Wikimedia Commons (Year Unknown), Oldclassiccar (2025), Adobe (Year Unknown), Alla (2020), Chairish (2025), Collectors Weekly (2025), Pendemonium (2025), iStock (Year Unknown), Etsy (Year Unknown), Newcastle University (2019)

Mood Boards: Daisy



Women in Literature (2018), Kornelka44 (Year Unknown), Etsy (Year Unknown), Dowel (2025), Leslie (1852), Gros (1801), Behlen (2022), Institute of Medicine (2002), Etsy (2025), Wikipedia (2025)

For Daisy we focused on both women's fashion and popular hairstyles at the time, as well as working women- what they would have worn and how they would have presented themselves.

Noting that Daisy often refers to herself as 'refined', using this to assume she is elegant and well-dressed and well-mannered.

Mood Boards: The Boss



We saw The Boss as quite a mystery figure who encapsulates all employers of the time, he is rich and greedy and powerful beyond belief.
He is smartly dressed, as he can afford to be so, and is the type of man to smoke cigars.
We found 'Corona Pandemonium' was a cigar brand.

Cornwell (2017), Bob Hawke College (Year Unknown), BAMF Style (2025), Historical New York USA (2024), Porter (2013), U Transition (2021), Roszko (2024), Unsplash (Year Unknown), SmokeKing (Year Unknown, Post Editors (2022), Picryl (Year Unknown)

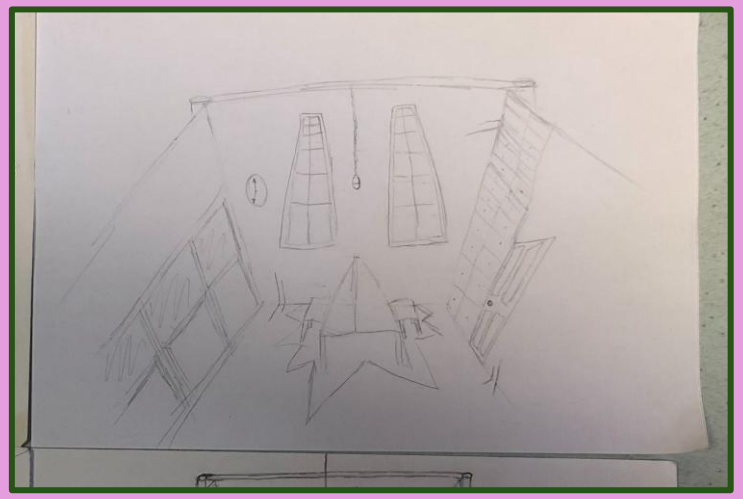
Mood Boards: Set Design

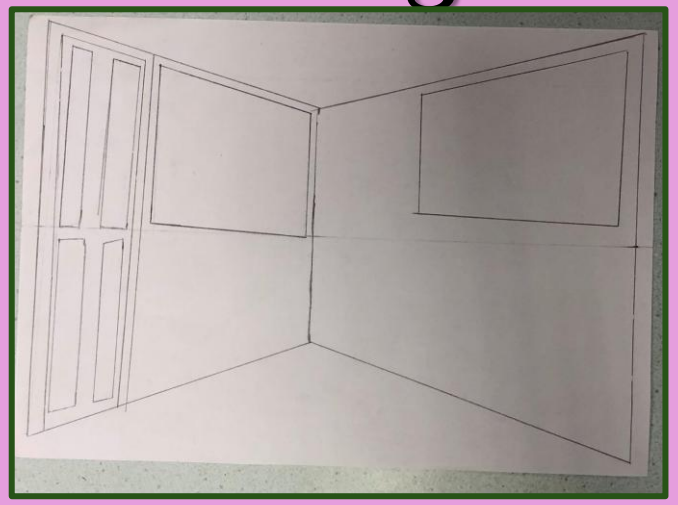


We then created a mood board for the general set design, looking at the desks and stools from Caligari again, as well as the painted backdrops. We explored curved furniture to distort the space and found office reference images from the 1920s to attempt to combine our design of an office space with the expressionist and twisted style.

r2WPadmin (2015), Runk (Year Unknown), Urban Remains (Year Unknown), Worthpoint (2019), Fuller (2020), Vinterior (Year Unknown), IMDb (2025), 1stdibs (2017), Monovisions (2025), Wikipedia (2025, a), Wikipedia (2025, b)

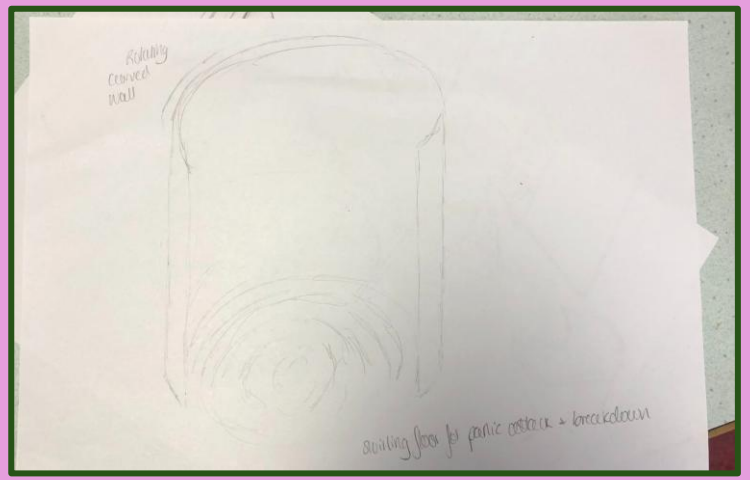
Initial Sketches and Design Discussions:



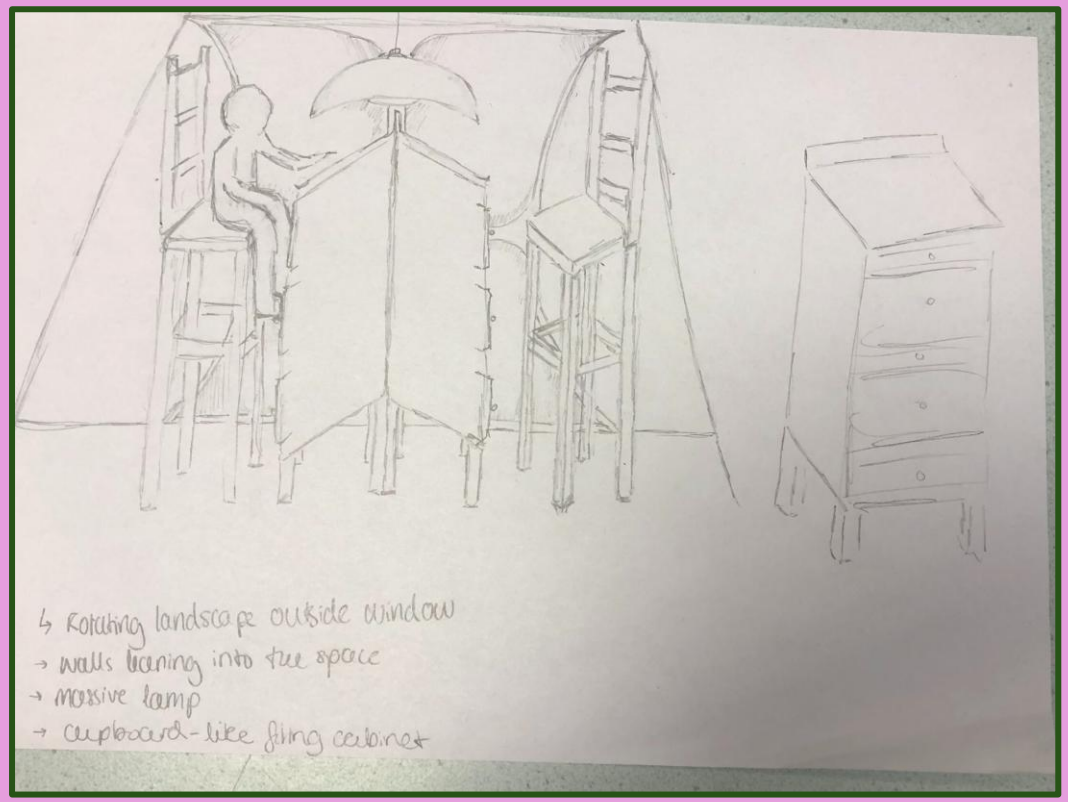


As we were such a large group, we decided to all create some sketches of our ideas for the set, which we then presented to the group to talk about the specific features we liked about our design and each others designs. One of my designs is the image below, I looked at how we could take influence from the Caligari desks, making them an exaggerated height. I also liked the idea of hanging the light low to make it more uncomfortable.

Above are some other sketches from the group, exploring painted shadows on the floor and drawers on the walls. Below is another sketch I did, experimenting with a curved space, but I didn't like this as it wasn't in line with the German Expressionist style of sharp angles.

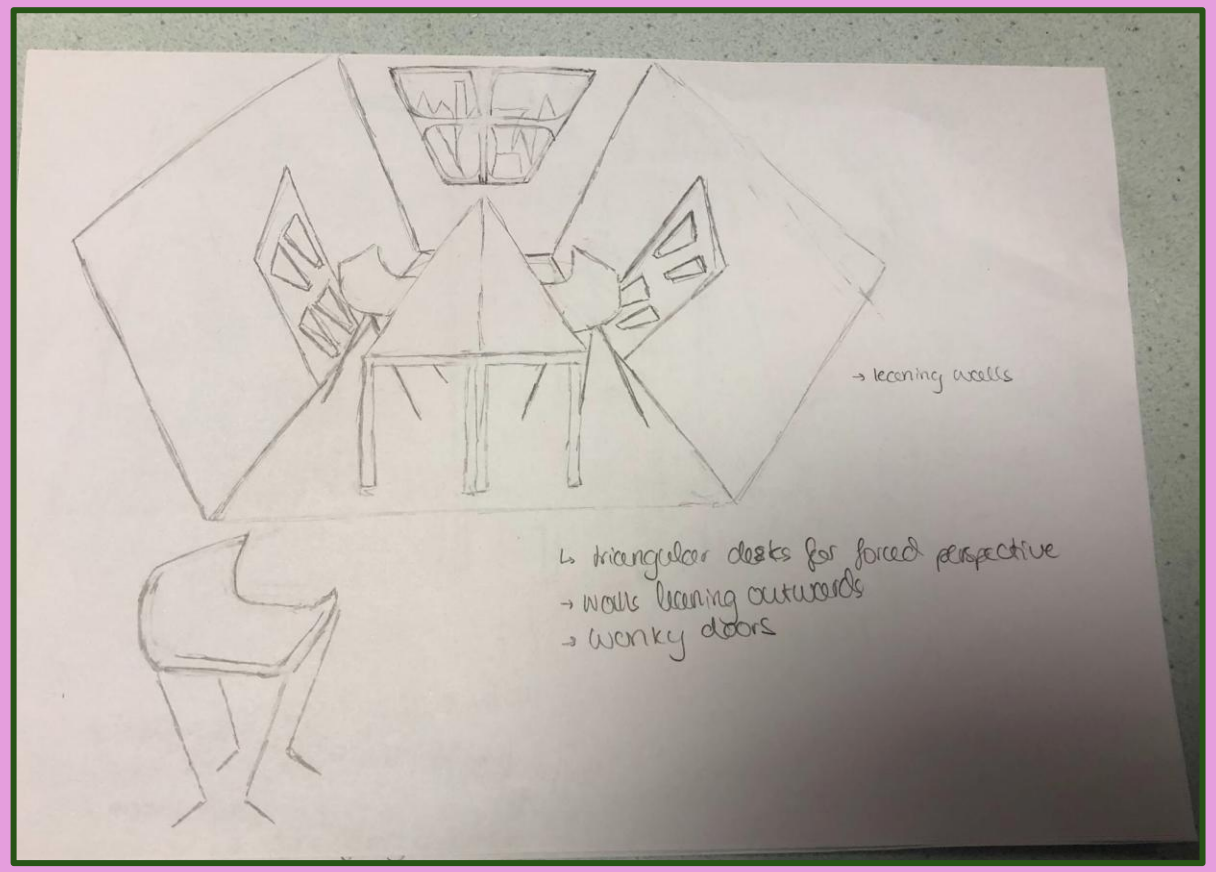


I looked at slanting the walls inwards and having a large window behind them, through which you could see a city, this could then be used to create the spinning effect by having a rotating backdrop- this technique was something our group was interested in from the beginning as a way to create the effect of the room spinning without using a revolve.



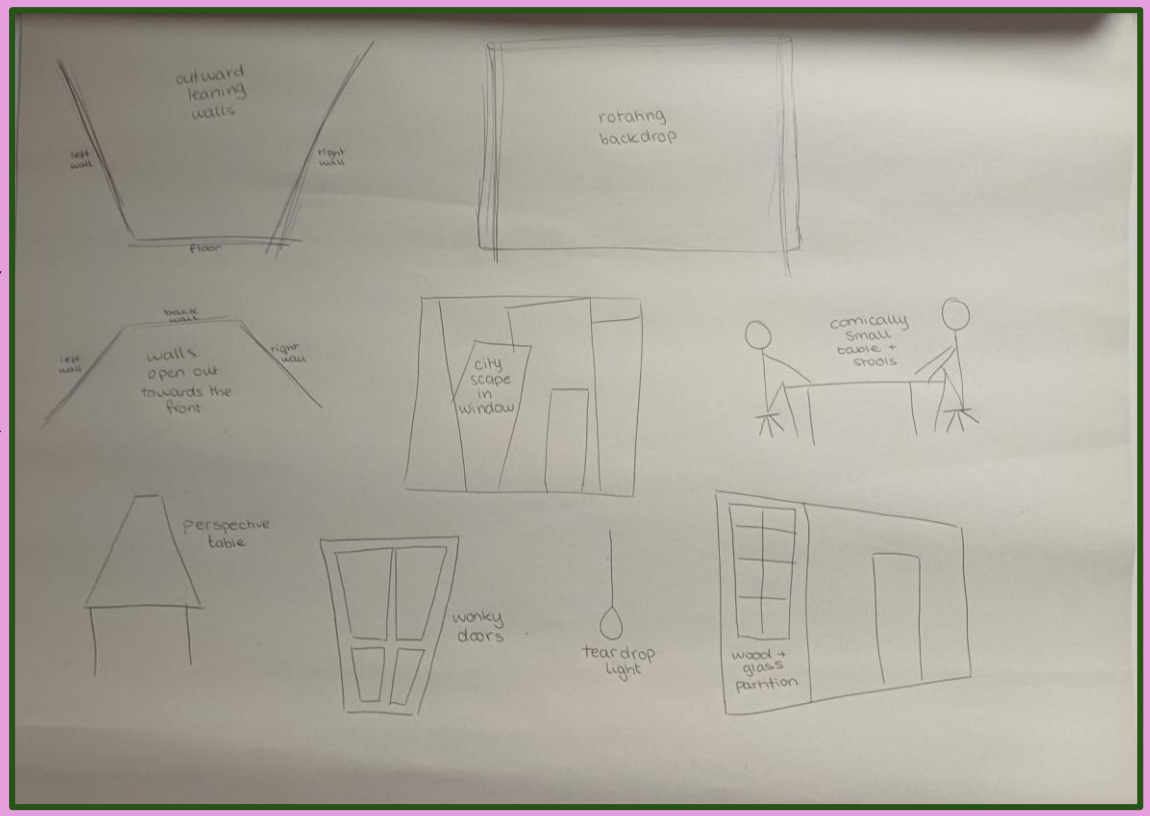
Initial Sketches and Design Discussions:

Below is my favourite design that I sketched, I love the walls slanting outwards and a triangular shaped table to mimic forced perspective in the set, attempting to make the room look longer than it is. I included doors either side, as described in the stage directions, and I kept the scrolling backdrop in the window along with the high tables and chairs.

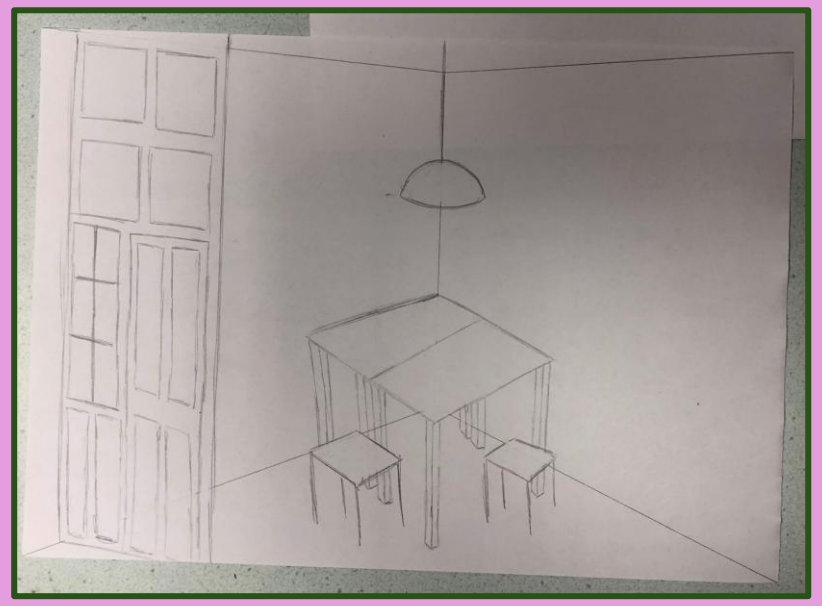


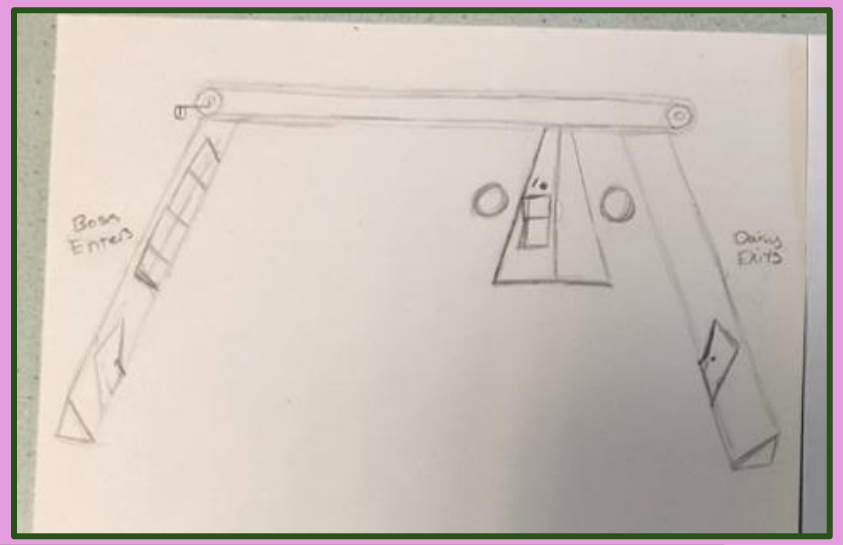
After discussing everyone's sketches we created a diagram on the board of all of our favourite features that we wanted to include. These were outward slanting walls, a rotating backdrop for the back wall, a city scape in the window, the triangular perspective table, wonky doors, a hanging pendant light, and a wood and glass partition- to stay accurate to the set description in the script. We altered the exaggerated tables to be too small rather than too tall, to adjust our design to the space we were working in.

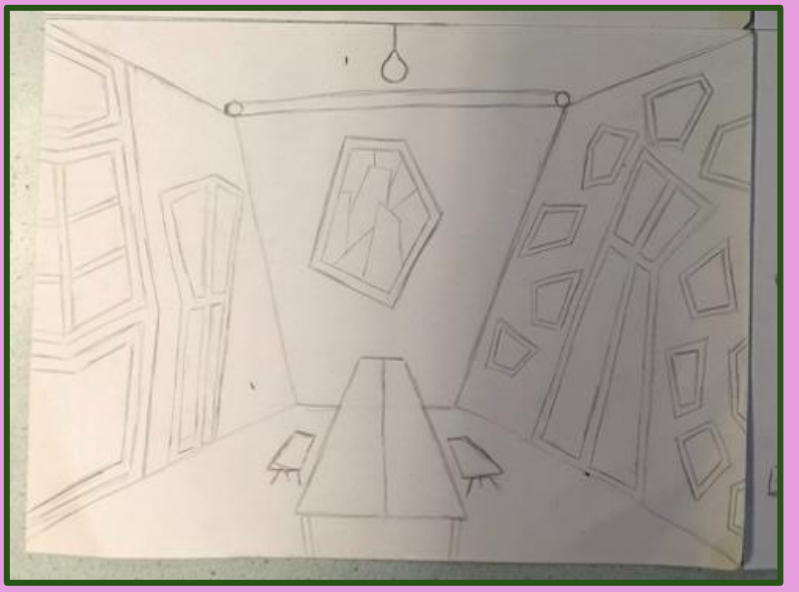
Drawn by Annie Picton →



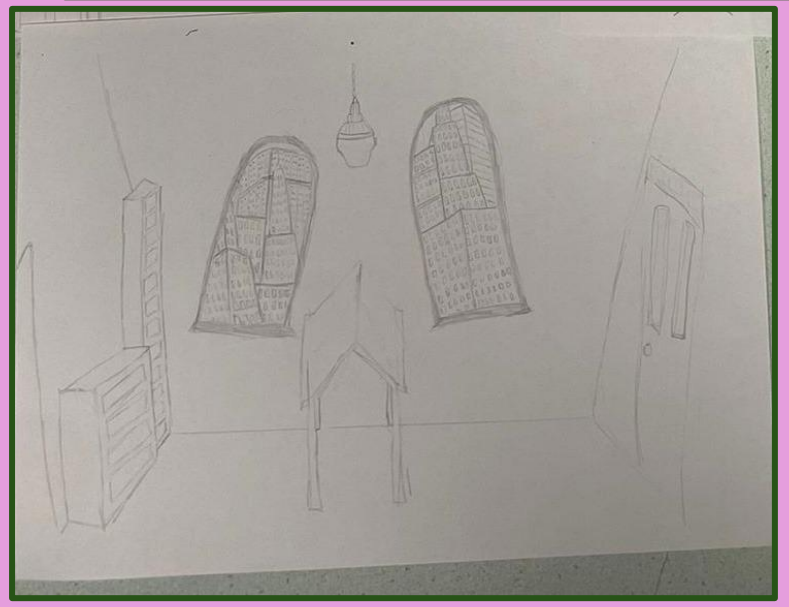
Refined Sketches:

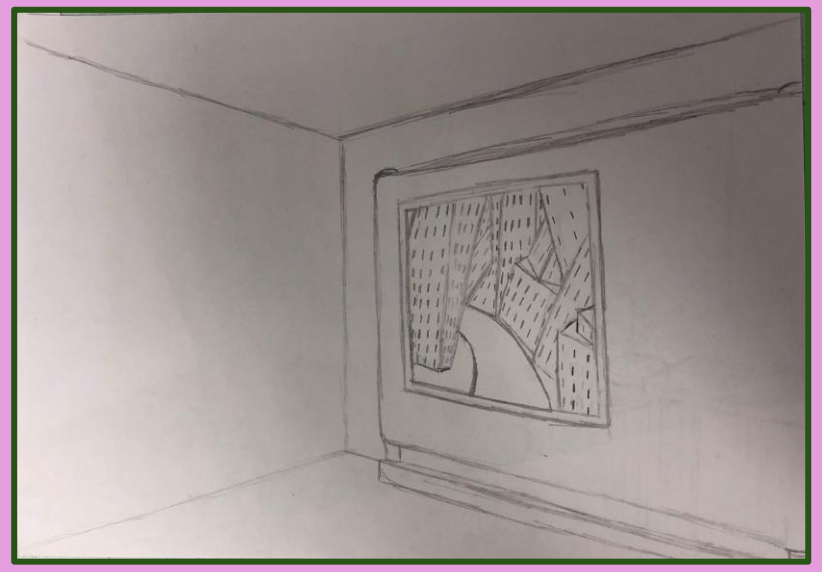




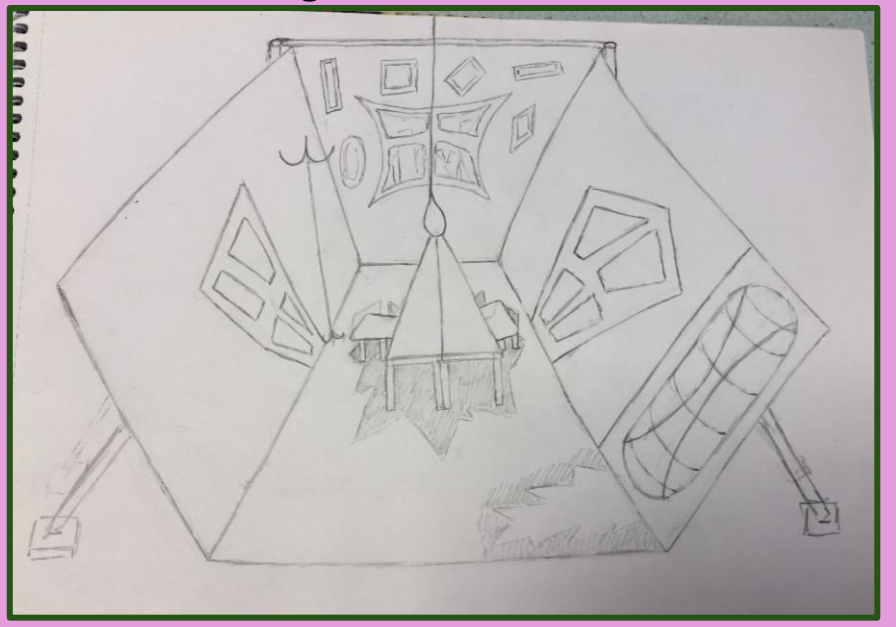


We all then created more sketches with these specific features included, expanding on the design with picture frames and filing cabinets, as well as moving the table to the side.



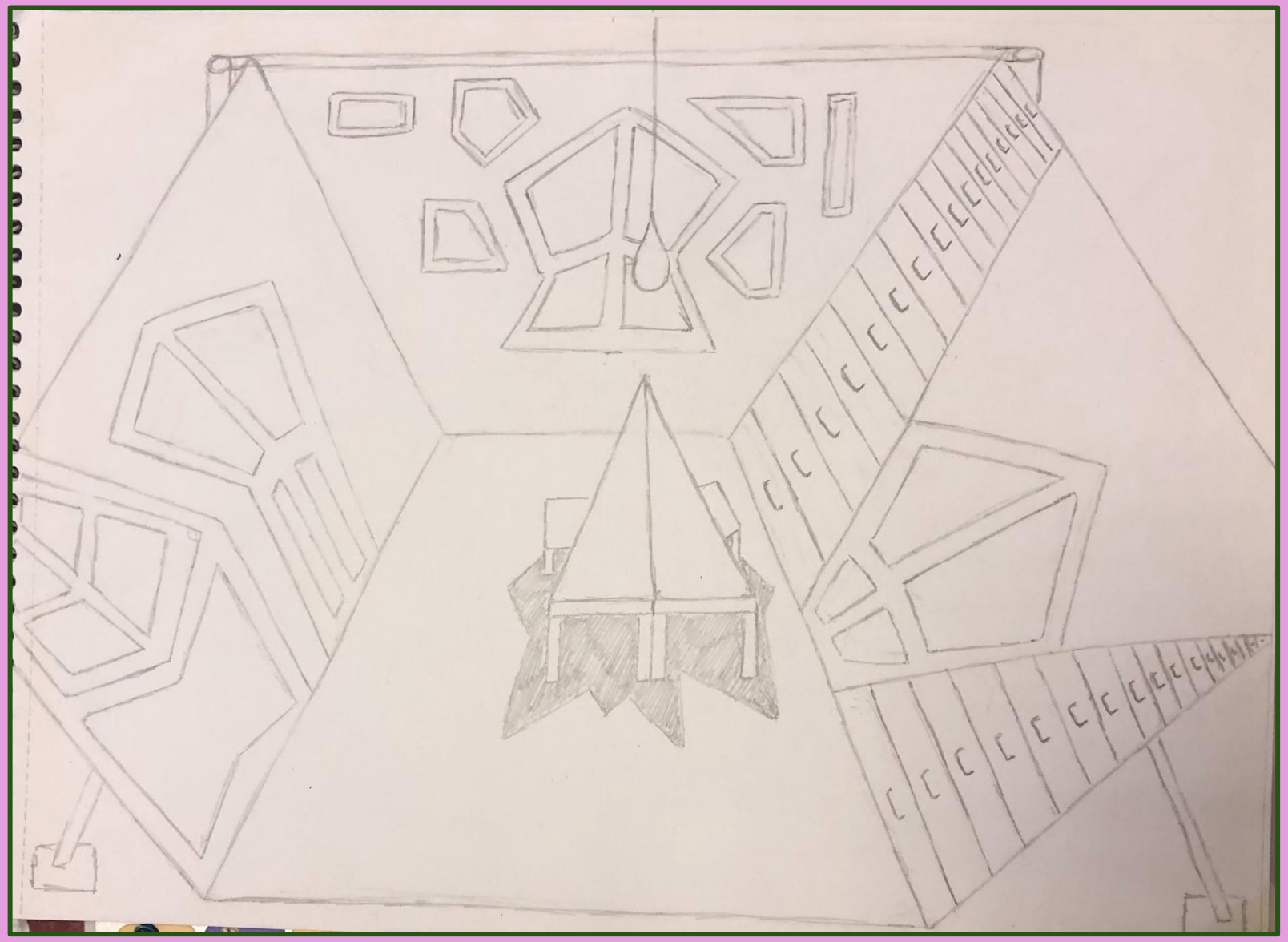


My design is in the bottom right, the rest are everyone else's. After one final discussion, I created the final design sketch of our idea, pictured on the next slide.



Final Design:

We decided to have the picture frames moved to the rotating backdrop. This backdrop would have the other two walls painted on the back to imitate the room rotating. I continued the forced perspective into the filing cabinets in the wall, having them get smaller at the top. I also included a painted shadow directly beneath the table, but we decided to refine the floor design later on to add more shadows and texture.
I included the braces supporting the walls as we decided we would create flats, and I included the poles for the backdrop although this unconfirmed.

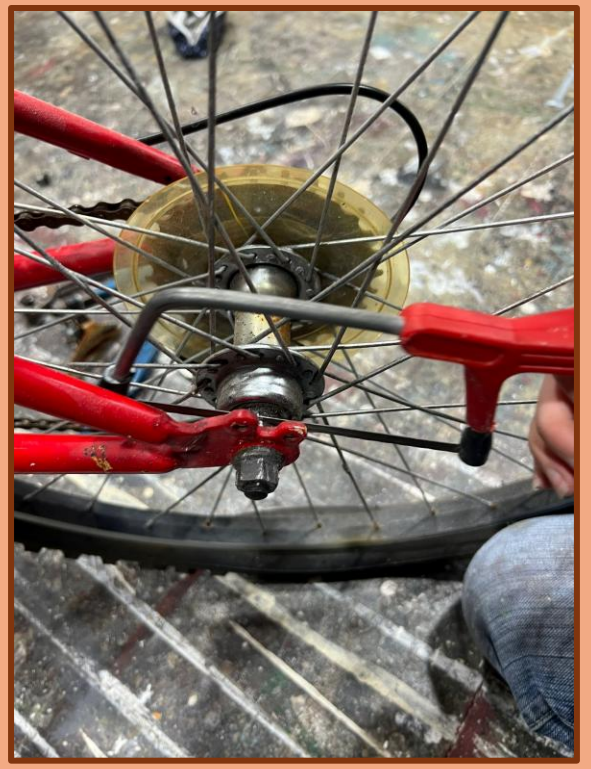


In our design we took inspiration from the painted shadows and tilting jagged angles in The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920), as well as the awkward height of the tables and chairs. Attempting to create suggestions of inferiority and discomfort. We took inspiration from Metropolis' (1927) depiction of a dystopian city for our cityscape seen out of the window upstage, hinting at a hostility and disillusionment to their extreme capitalistic world.

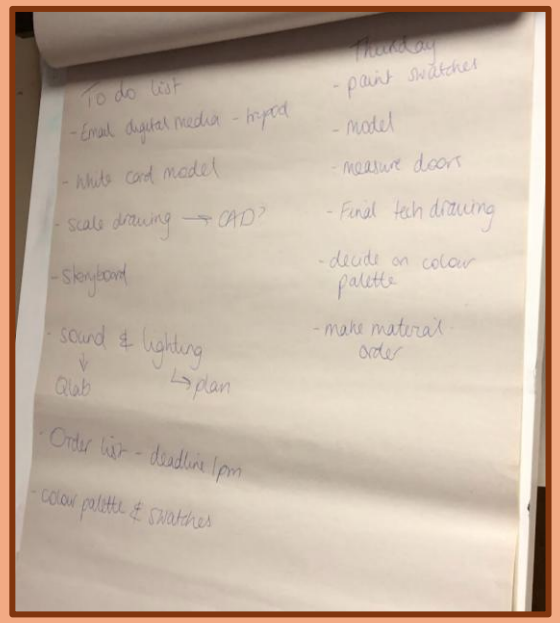
Rotating Scenery Contraption:

In the initial stages of designing the rotating backdrop, we thought we could create a similar mechanism to a bike chain, where a chain is rotated using a pedal which turns two tubes connected to the fabric. This would be manually operated. We had a lot of trouble with how this would all come together, as we weren't sure the chain would be able to stay taut without snapping, as well as being unsure of how to connect the top and bottom of the tubes to the pedal.









During this process we found PVC pipes, that would work for holding the fabric, and we tested Copydex glue on the pipes to see if it dried tacky enough to grip the fabric. We planned on using heavy weight calico fabric. Meanwhile, Anne attempted to take apart a bike so that we could start experimenting, unfortunately this was unsuccessful, but a unanimous decision was made to find another method.

Rotating Scenery Contraption Research:

Latchless Rotating Shelving, by Kevin Hines
Double-bevelled ends to allow for 180 rotation, but we need 360 rotation, relies on distribution of weight, pivot point is central, it flips rather than rotates, not appropriate for what we need (Sammler and Harvey, 2002, p. 63)

Pneumatically tripped circular curtain, by Kraig Blythe
Circular rail we hang the backdrop off of, the backdrop would always be curved, and we need it to be flat, but it would be an easier thing to operate. *(Sammler and Harvey, 2002, p. 87)*

(Sammler and Harvey, 2002, p. 63)

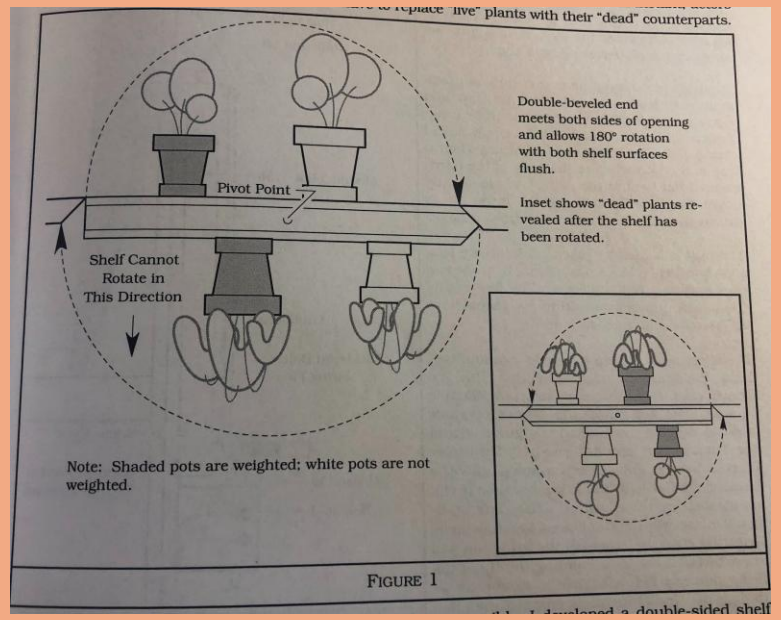


FIGURE 1

(Sammler and Harvey, 2002, p. 87)

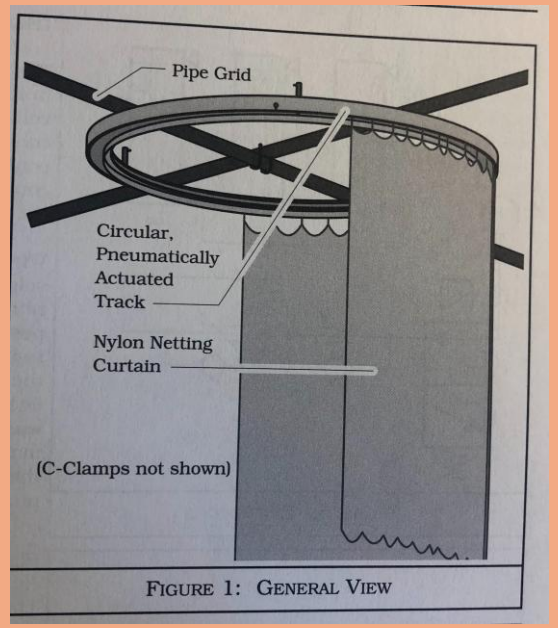
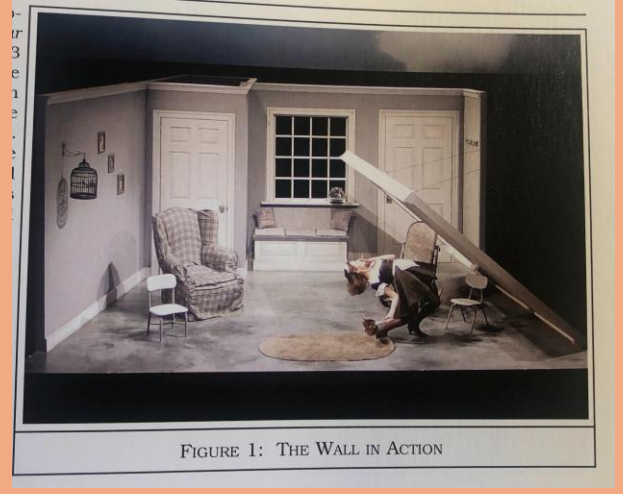


FIGURE 1: GENERAL VIEW


FIGURE 1: THE WALL IN ACTION

(Sammler and Harvey, 2013, p. 135)

Quiet and Cheap Track System, by Shaminda Amarakeen
A track system, we could make it circular for our project, would be very time consuming and expensive, there is a lack of space that would cause safety concerns for this design also. *(Sammler and Harvey, 2013, p. 122)*

Tilting a wall, by Greg Winkler
Using black galvanised aircraft cable, which would be expensive although durable
We could rig to the lighting bars and hinge to a base plate
We could have the walls lean inwards mid-performance during Mr. Zero's breakdown creating a claustrophobic actualisation of the walls closing in on him → although not what we want this would be interesting to look into for another project/production *(Sammler and Harvey, 2013, p. 135)*

Costume Cupboard:



Above is the finalised costume for The Boss, with Anne playing the role.

We visited the costume cupboard to source all of our costumes from there, so that we could save our budget for the set we wanted to build. Using our mood boards and the reference images of fashion at the time to choose our pieces. For Daisy we found a shirt, skirt, and blazer, which we thought was appropriate for a woman to where to work in the 1920s. We managed to find some shirts, trousers, and blazers for Alice, Anne, and Charlie to try on for their suits. It was decided I would play Daisy, Alice would play Zero, and Charlie/Anne would play The Boss. We returned another day to collect ties, suspenders, and shoes. Me and Alice begun the costume list which Charlie completed. I really enjoyed getting the chance to put into practice some of the paperwork elements of the production process. To the right is our costume rack in the design room.

Zero	Grey Blazer	Costume Store	12/11/2025		
Zero	White Shirt	Costume Store	12/11/2025		
Zero	Black Trousers	Costume Store	12/11/2025		

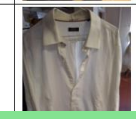
Zero	Black Suspenders	Costume Store	18/11/2025		
Zero	Black Tie	Costume Store	18/11/2025		
Zero	Black Shoes	Costume Store	18/11/2025		



Scene 2 Costume list

CHARCTER	ITEM	SOURCE (own or store)	FROM	TO	REF IMAGE
Zero Daisy	Sleeve Protector				
Zero Daisy	Green eye shade				
Zero	Derby	Costume Cupboard	12/11/2025		
Daisy	Straw Hat	Costume Cupboard	12/11/2025		

Daisy	Dark Grey Stripped Blazer	Costume Store	12/11/2025		
Daisy	White Frilly Shirt	Costume Store	12/11/2025		
Daisy	Grey Skirt	Costume Store	12/11/2025		
Daisy	Black Tights	Cameron	20/11/2025		
Daisy	Shoes	Cameron	20/11/2025		

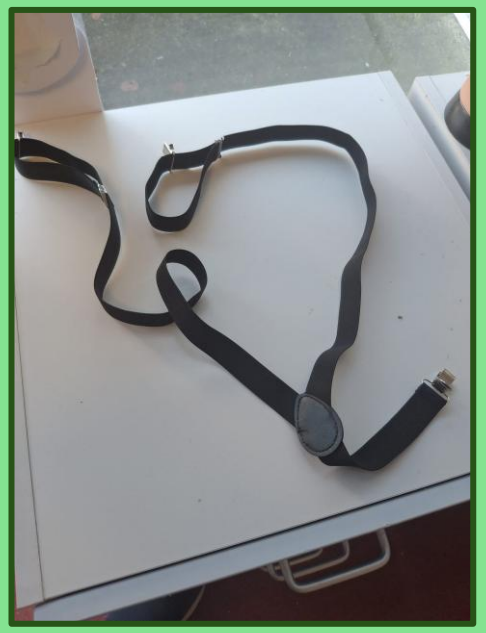
The Boss	Glasses	Props Cupboard	12/11/2025		
The Boss	Pocket Watch	Props Cupboard	12/11/2025		
The Boss	Blazer	Costume Store	18/11/2025		
The Boss	Shirt	Costume Store	18/11/2025		

Zero's Costume:



We decided that Mr. Zero's suit wouldn't be as coordinated as The Boss's suit, as Zero is poor so wouldn't be able to afford the latest trends.
We managed to find a hat that matched our mood board for Zero, and decided suspenders were more period-appropriate than a belt.









Above is an image of the finalised costume for Mr. Zero, with Alice playing the role.
We organised our costume rack according to what we would return that hadn't fit.







Daisy's Costume:

The finalised costume for Daisy, with me playing the role →





For Daisy's costume we went with a blouse that had embellishments and a frilly collar, as we wanted a more feminine look. Like Mr. Zero, we wanted Daisy's skirt and blazer to clash slightly in design, as she wouldn't be able to afford much either- especially as a single working woman.

I already owned shoes that we felt were appropriate for the time period, with a rounded look and a small heel. When put in black and white they didn't clash with the grey of the skirt and blazer, so we settled on them.

We were also able to find a straw hat in the costume cupboard, as Daisy is described as having a 'frowsy straw' hat. Although it wasn't the exact style we had in mind, it was the closest we could get as we wanted to save our budget.







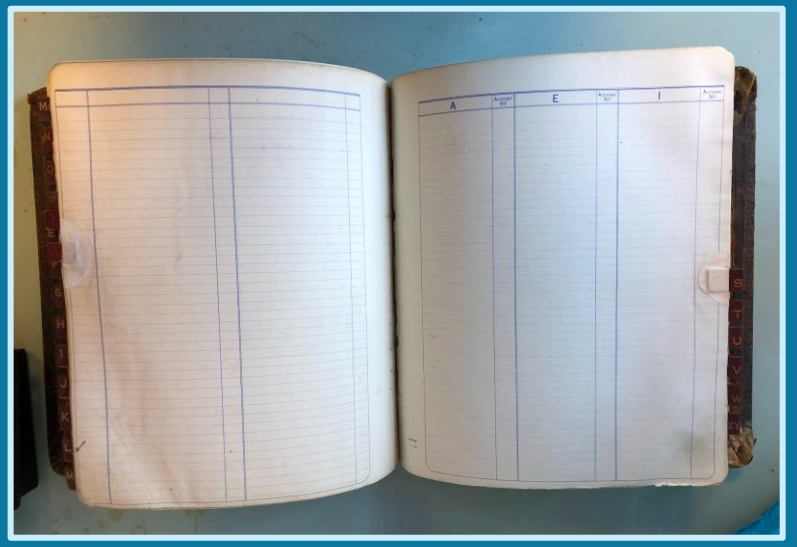


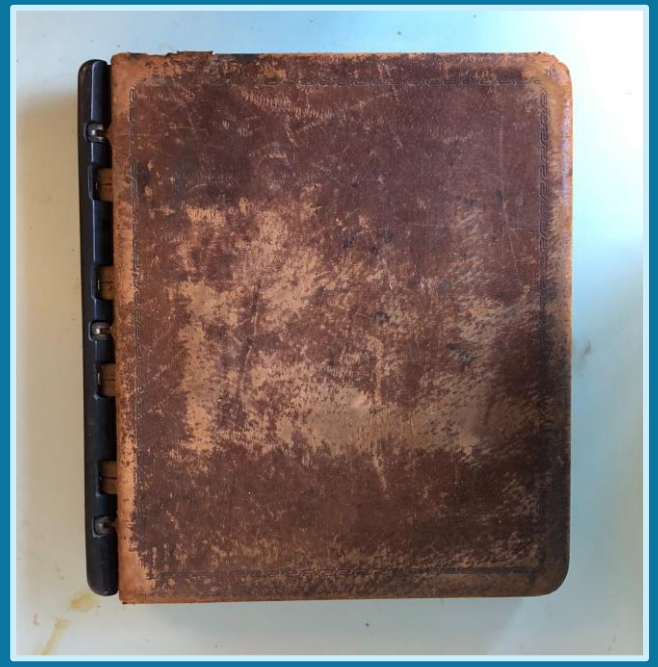
Props Store:

Like the costumes, we wanted to source our props from the props store to retain our budget.



We were able to find props perfect for The Adding Machine, some of my favourites being the massive leather-bound book full of lined paper- perfect for Mr. Zero's book, rolls of receipt paper for the slips, and the murder weapon. The script describes the weapon as a bill file, although when first researching this nothing came up that looked like it could be used to kill. We explored letter openers, until we found a receipt holder, which could be interpreted as a bill file (for filing receipts) and has a sharp end, perfect for the murder weapon.





We also collected an ink pot for their desk, some glasses, and a pocket watch. As well as cigars in case we wanted The Boss to be holding one.











Props List:

Scene 2 Props list

ITEM	CHARCTER	PAGE NO.	SOURCE	REF IMAGE
Pile of slips	Daisy	6	Props Cupboard	
Ruled paper	Zero	6	Props Cupboard	
Eraser	Zero	6		
Pen	Zero	6	Props Cupboard	
Ink Pot	Zero		Props Cupboard	
Bill File/Weapon	Zero		Props Cupboard	
Money	Zero and Daisy	6	Props Cupboard	

We did the same with the props as we did the costumes, and made a props list to detail where everything was sourced from, when it would be used in the scene, and a reference image. We also separately documented what areas of the props store and costume cupboard we collected everything from, in order to return it to the same spot. This list was again started by me and Alice and completed by Charlie.

Charlie then began a separate Set Dressing table beneath, to establish what we would need in the set before the scene began.

Scene 2 Set Dressing

ITEM	SET PLACEMENT	PAGE NUMBER	SOURCED	IMAGE
Money/Money in Wallet	On Desk	6 to 8	Prop Cupboard	
Cigar	On the boss	6 to 8	Prop Cupboard	

Paint Swatches:







The acrylic paint when watered down lost a lot of its pigment, although it would be cheap, it wasn't the effect we were going for. Whilst the fabric paint didn't spread easily

The castle paints came in too small an amount and didn't spread easily



Me, Alice, and Annie swatched different paint samples, deciding to go with an emulsion paint as we could get a large quantity for a cheap price.





Bristol's paint was also great, but we thought it might be pricier.











Rosco's scenic art paint was a great option, but we knew it would be more expensive.



Marking Out and Problem Solving the Space:



Before we could begin the scale model, we needed to know how much steel deck we wanted to use, as our flats would sit on top of these and that would alter the height and available space. Alice and Annie began by marking out the dimensions of our set, taping down the backdrop and the flats. I then went down to help in placing the steel decks on top of this. We soon realised the placement of our set and the size meant there wouldn't be a safe fire walkway and so we decided to rethink the set.

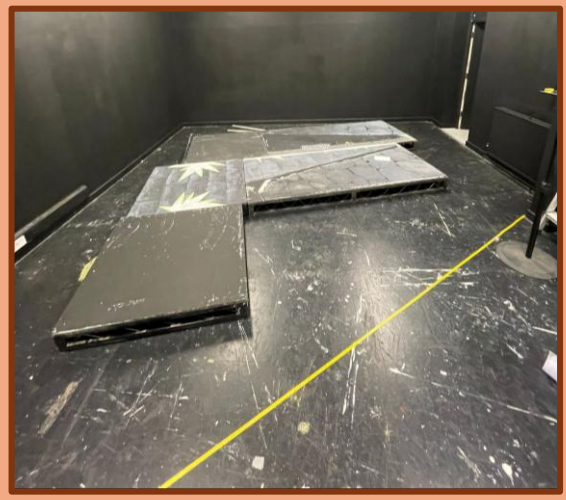


We restarted by moving the steel deck out of the way and measuring out a walkway, 80cm wide. From this we decided we would need to move the back wall further back and possibly make the walls shorter. Instead, we decided to angle them out more, meaning we would only need one 4x8 deck at the back.



From this we positioned the rest of the decking, with an appropriate amount of space around the edges for braces and operating the scenery.





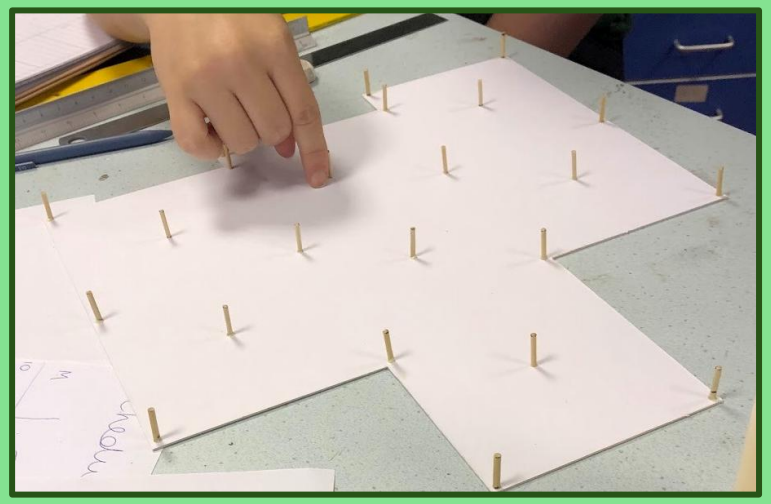
We took measurements of the decking for the CAD drawing and decided to begin the scale model. Which would then help us in deciding whether we would need to reduce the set further or if we could keep it as it was.

The taped yellow line represents the divide in the space between the two groups.

Scale Model:

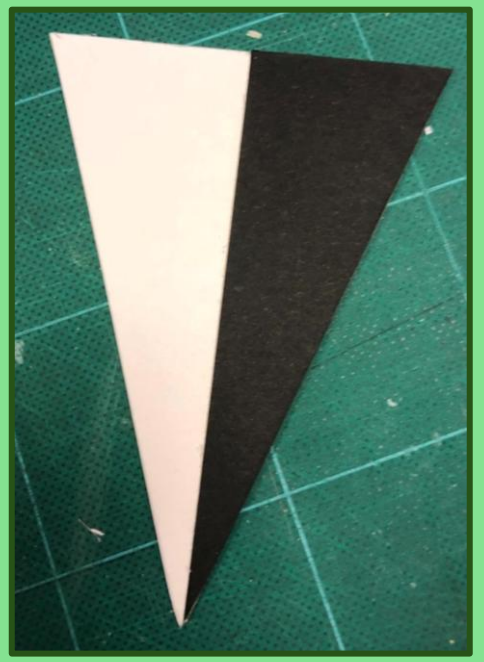
The next task was to create a scale model, we chose to do this in 1:10 as we were working with such a small space, it would be easier to experiment with a larger model. I was excited to develop my modelmaking skills from the last module and to work in a new scale, as I've only ever worked with 1:25. We measured the doors and height of the room and as Alice worked on the CAD drawing, me and Annie began making the model. Using a mixture of model and CAD to figure out the angles the walls would tilt so that they didn't hit the ceiling, and how far out they would need to sit.



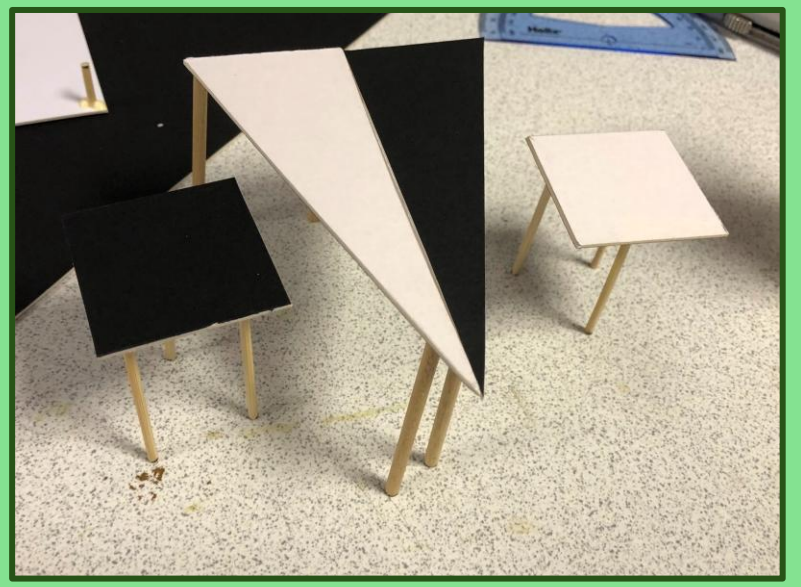


We used wooden sticks for the legs and steel deck legs.

Whilst Annie worked on the flats and the floor space, I built a model of the table. To calculate the dimensions of the table I went into the space with my tape measure to see roughly where the door would be in the stage left wall, so that the table wouldn't obstruct anyone 'entering' and 'exiting' (as these were fake doors). I decided 4 feet was a good length, and if it needed to be shortened due to any changes, we could easily cut length off the straight edge of the table.



I used black and white card for the table to experiment with how the forced perspective looked with exaggerated shadows, as well as to communicate the contrast in Daisy and Mr. Zero despite their mutual attraction and desire.



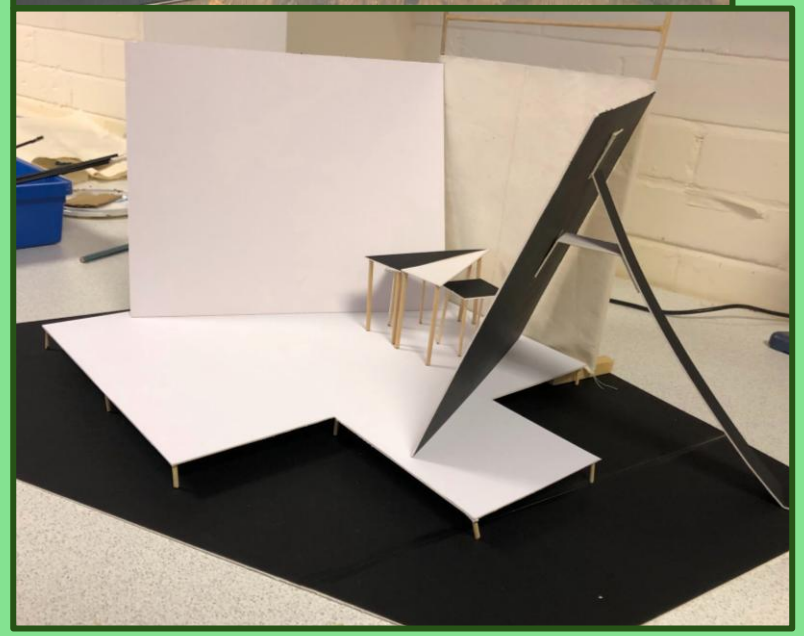


Scale Model:

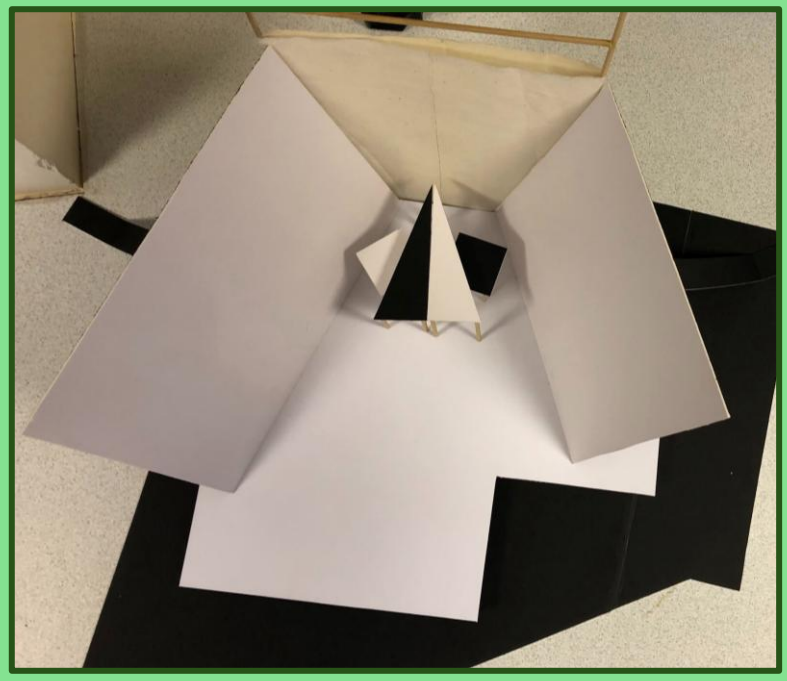


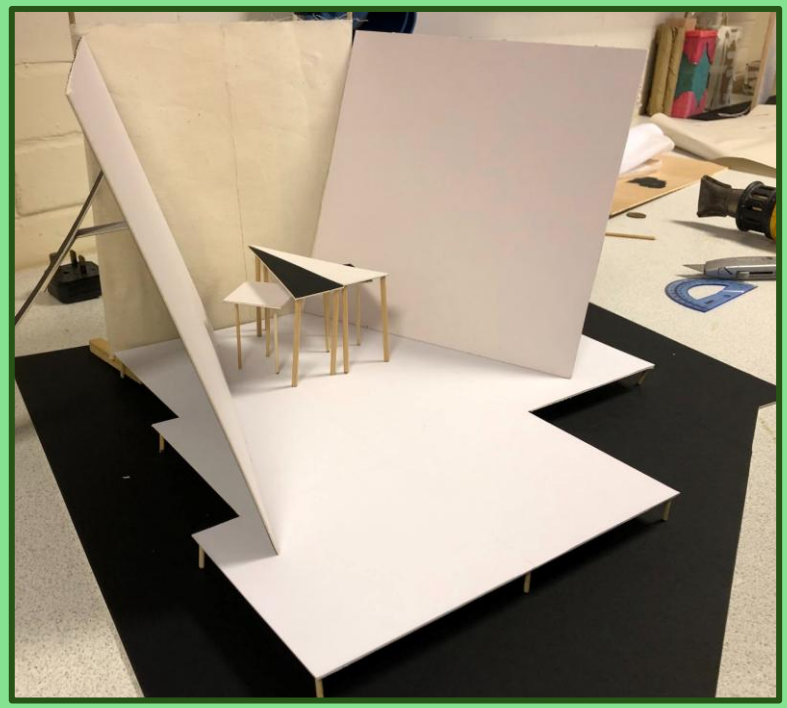
The scale model helped in our decision to paint the table both black and white, as well as seeing how the walls positioned at an angle outwards would mean less space upstage than we originally thought they'd be. This meant we decided to place the table centre stage instead of upstage left.

We were also able to visualise the space around the set for braces to go and how much room we would have to operate the rotating scenery. We were concerned there wouldn't be enough space.



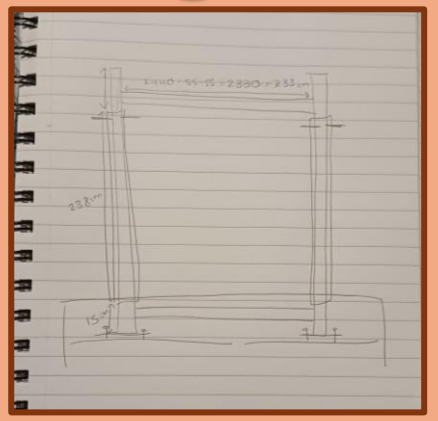
Alice made the model for the rotating scenery, cutting some of the lightweight calico we had already, and positioning it on wooden sticks placed in a wooden base, this had two supporting poles going across it.
This eventually helped us in our redesigning of the rotating scenery contraption, as it was clear the bike chain idea would not be successful.





Problem Solving Rotating Scenery:





After discussions with Dave, we decided the best material to make a frame out of was scaffolding poles, which the workshop already had. We collected poles large enough for the width, 4 connectors and 2 feet, and 2 poles almost large enough for the height. We put this together to see how it would work. We knew we would need to build a base for the feet to stand in securely.







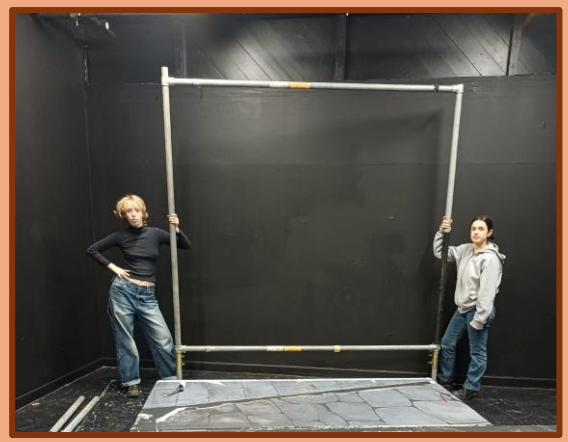
After this, we were able to find two poles large enough to be extensions on the height, attaching them with a joint. When we first put this together, we had the bottom cross bar above the joint. We ended up switching this round to have it below the joint, so that it wouldn't be seen above the steel deck. We now had a metal frame strong enough to hold the canvas fabric taught around it. Using a ratchet wrench to tighten the nuts and bolts.





We then cut two PVC tubes down to the correct length, for the fabric to spin around. Waiting until we had prepped our fabric before we applied any glue or grip to them. We cut these with a chop saw. I suggested that we attached a handle to the tubes for us to manually turn them at the same time, with two people on either end.







Material Ordering:

When it came to ordering materials, I took initiative in sourcing and organising, as I was interested in getting familiar and more comfortable with both calculating how much of a material you need, as well as finding suppliers that would be quick, affordable, and reliable. I started by splitting our set into sections: flats, rotating scenery, table + chairs, and paint. When we began looking at the cost of wood to create our flats, we realised we wouldn't be able to afford it. So, after discussing our concerns with Dave, we decided to make canvas flats. Changing the calico for the backdrop to canvas also meant we only needed one fabric order. I worked out we would need 12m of canvas fabric as we needed 5x 4' flats, which is 6.1m (without excess), and then two lots of 8' for our backdrop, which is 10.98m (without excess). Adding excess into this equation, meant 12m was a suitable amount of fabric. I got the website Whaleys Fabrics from Dave.

Material Order:

Wood:

50m of 3x1 softwood

Paint:

White Emulsion Paint - 10L
Crown Matt Emulsion Paint - Pure Brilliant White - 10L | Wickes.co.uk
Price: £10

Black Emulsion Paint - 5L
Wickes Vinyl Matt Emulsion Paint - Midnight Black No.255 - 5L | Wickes.co.uk
Price: £15
Delivery Cost: £4.00

Cloth:
12m x 2.94m of 318gsm Painting Canvas Fabric
Painting Canvas 8.9oz (Duck) - Whaleys Fabrics
Price: £115.06 (£95.88 + tax of £19.18)

Total Cost (not including wood) → £144.06

Wood:
Flats:
→ £1.95 Pembrokeshire Building Supplies → £97.50 (3x1)
→ Table and Chairs: 12mm plywood from workshop
→ Source stools!
→ Scraps for picture frames and table legs

Paint:
→ Crown Matt Emulsion Paint - Pure Brilliant White - 10L | Wickes.co.uk £10 white paint 10L
→ Wickes Vinyl Matt Emulsion Paint - Midnight Black No.255 - 5L | Wickes.co.uk £15 black paint 5L

Rotating Scenery:
Cloth: Painting Canvas 8.9oz (Duck) - Whaleys Fabrics
12m: £115.06

Poles: workshop pvc pipes + scaffolding poles
Floor Bearings: hole in a block of wood with a scaffolding foot
Double-sided tape or glue

Steel deck is 180mm

As we were able to source all of the rotating contraption from around the workshop, we were able to save on our budget.

Paint was simpler, as we only needed white and black emulsion paint, I found discount deals at Wickes for the amount we needed. When calculating for the wood, we did the same as with the fabric, with Dave assisting us as he would order it from Pembroke Building Supplies, as they are fast and cheap.

We decided to source the stools from the furniture store, and to build the table out of 12mm plywood, putting some aside in the workshop.



Fire Safety and Changes to Steel Deck:







We made sure to leave plenty of space at the back to operate the scenery and ended up with more space than before for the braces! We then marked out our walls with tape so that we could take our new measurements.



We also made sure to line the entire edge of the steel deck with white tape, so that it reduced the trip hazard.

When originally marking out our fire walkway, we were unaware that it needed to be a straight line. As we had laid out our steel deck and then created a walkway with corners, this was not fire exit safe. We returned to the space to move the decking and mark out a new fire walkway. After which, me and Alice used the CAD drawing to rotate the set and propose the idea of shortening one of the walls. The rest of the group suggested we angle the longest wall outwards more so that it would fit within the space. We all liked this idea so set about rearranging the new steel deck outline.

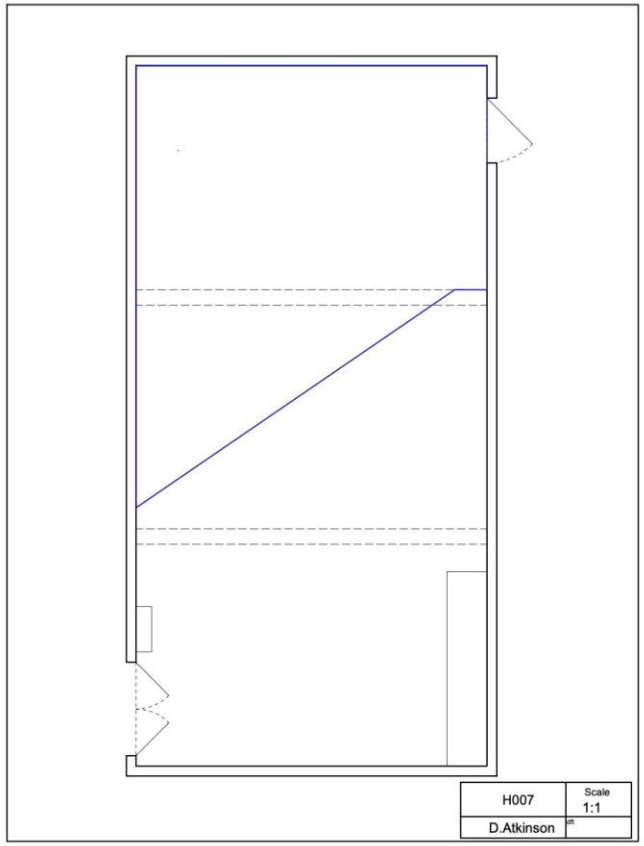




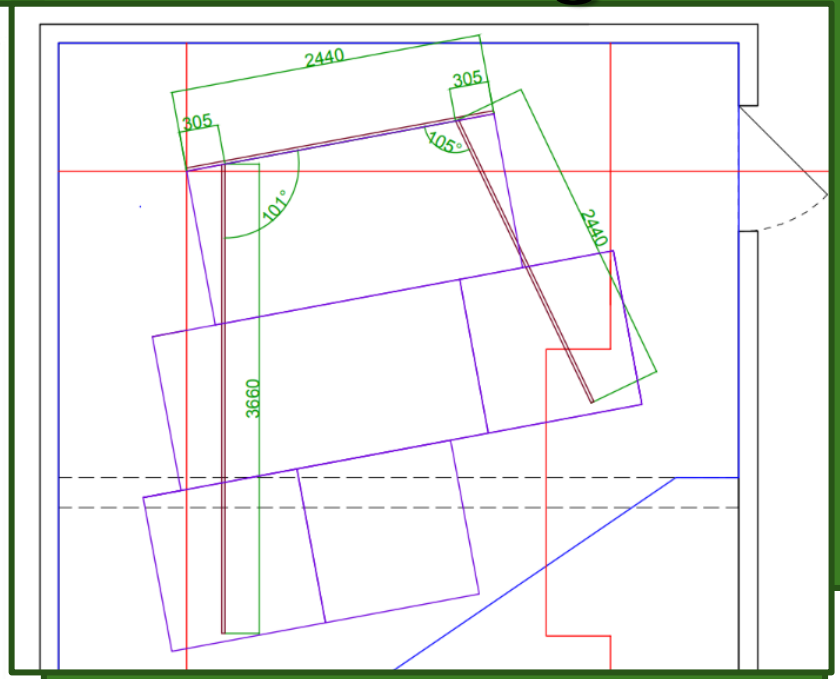




CAD and Technical Drawings:



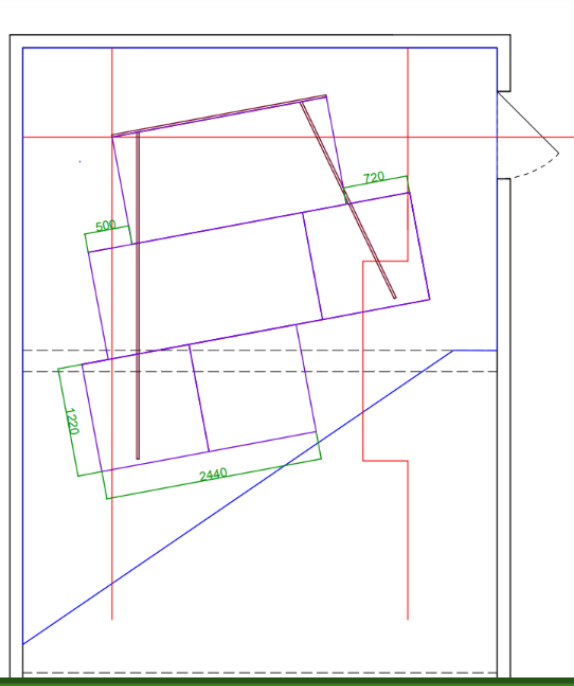
Working from the CAD floor plan given to us of the black box room in the Halliwell, Alice divided the space to match the how we had split the room between the groups.



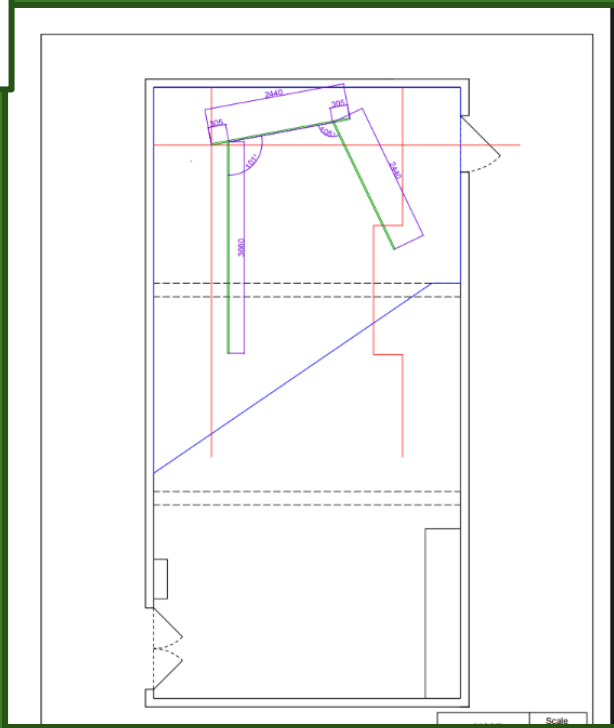
Wall dimensions from 14/11/2025

Having the CAD drawing really helped our group visualise what we would be able to do in such a small space, as well to trouble shoot ideas to see if they were possible before we got ahead of ourselves.

These are all of the initial CAD drawings of our original design for the steel deck and wall placement, the dimensions of the walls stayed the same, but the floor plan and steel deck itself changed quite a bit



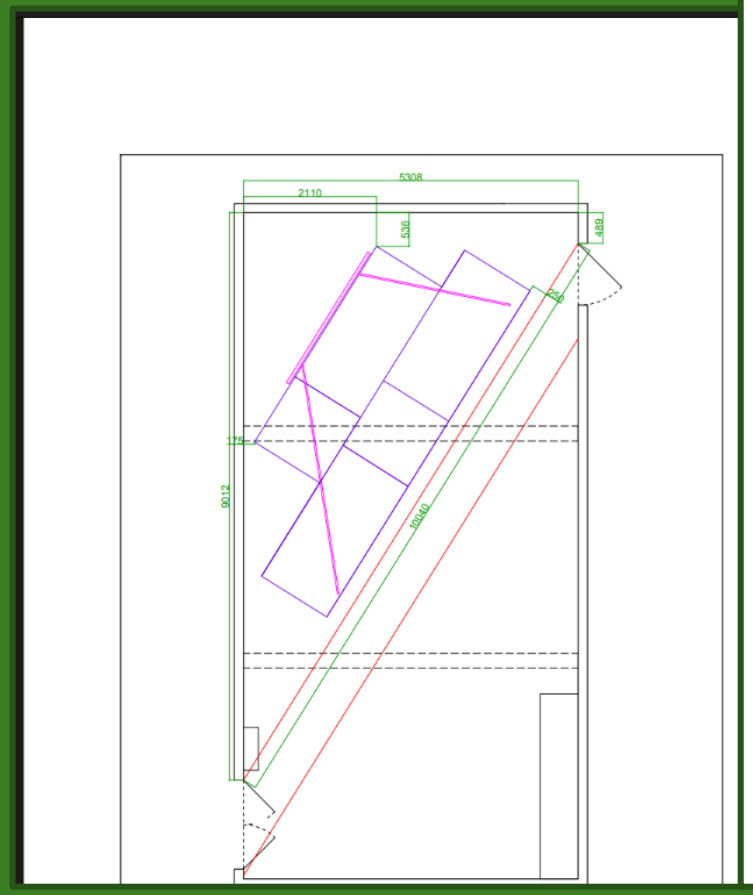
Steel Deck from 14/11/2025



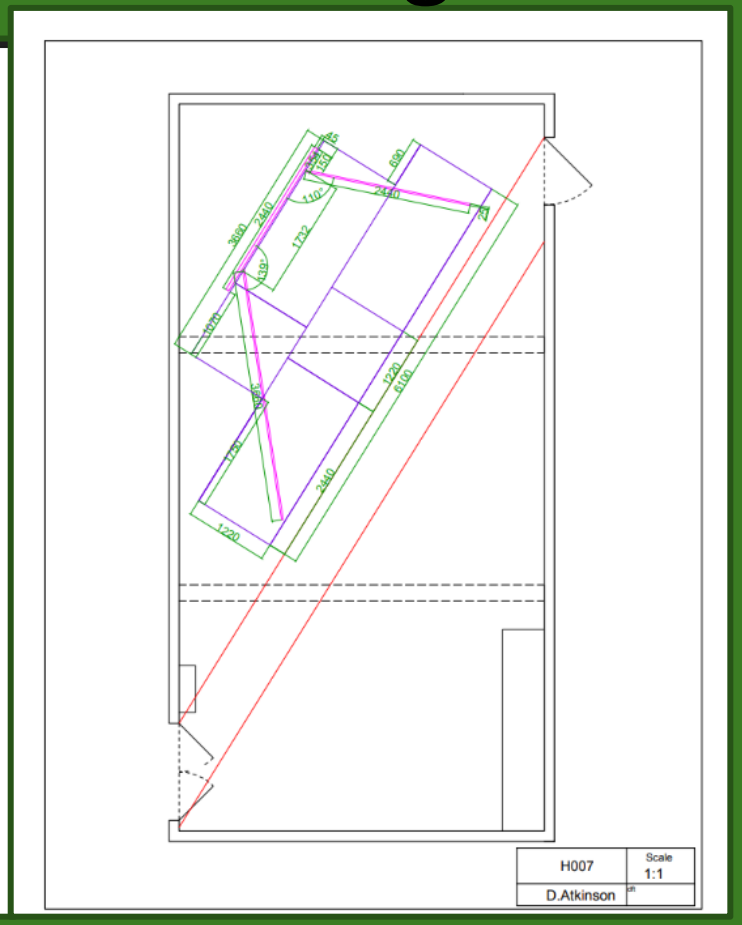
All CAD drawings were created by Alice Pearson.

Floor plan from 14/11/2025

CAD and Technical Drawings:



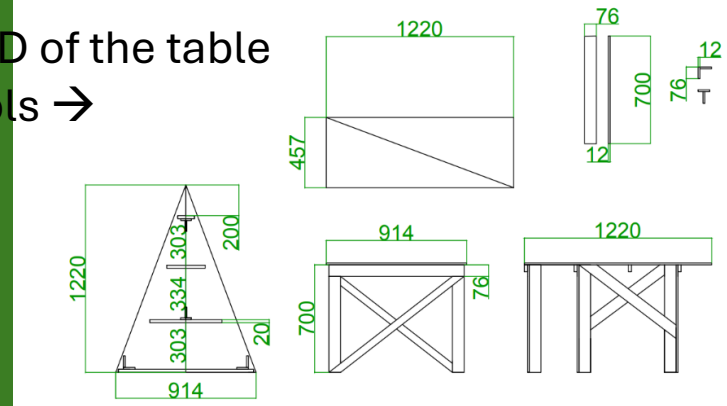
Most recent Floor Plan



Most recent Wall Placement

Due to having to change our fire walkway, the space we had to work in altered quite drastically. Whilst the rest of the group moved the steel decking out of way, me and Alice worked on the CAD drawing to problem solve how we could fit the set in. We rotated the walls until they fit within the new space, but the stage right wall still stuck over the setting line. We decided to suggest shortening the wall to be equal length to the other side.

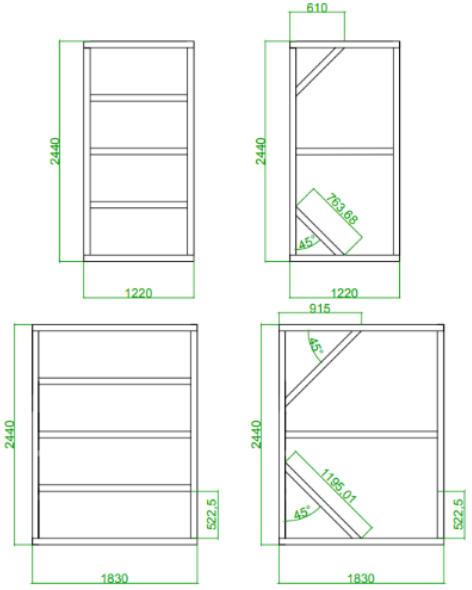
Final CAD of the table and stools →



The CAD drawings of the table and flats remained the same in dimension, with extra cross bars being added to the table to create more stability.
Whilst the toggles on the flats were adjusted for the amount of wood we had available and the crossbar length.

With this new floorplan we would now be able to make our finalised and refined model, including the scenic art design on it as well.

Final CAD of the flats



Rigging Sound:





When rigging the sound, I knew I wanted two speakers and decided to rig these either side of the room on the lighting bars, roughly in the middle of our halfway point, after checking with Mary who was sound for the other group, we went ahead and attached these to the bars. Mary and I then got the sound desk and the amplifier, which we set up on a table at the side. We connected them to power with two IEC cables. We then connected them to each other with two jack to XLR cables. All we needed then was to connect the speakers to the amp.



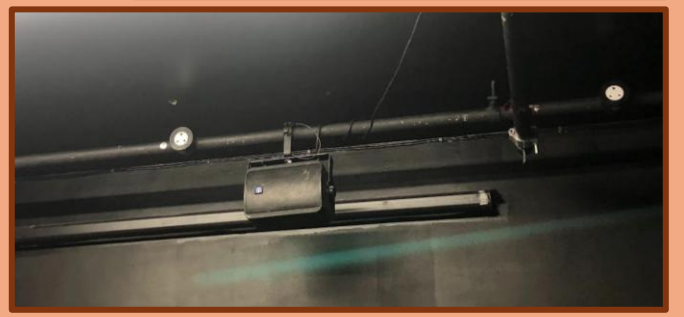




I then found an XLR to headphone jack cable, which I plugged into the desk to connect to my laptop. I had some trouble getting sound to come out, ensuring everything was on and all the volume dials were up, I then checked the output on my laptop. In the end I needed to adjust the Aux 1 and Aux 2 dials as this was what the amp was connected to.







This was done with speaker cable, opening the end of the cable to expose the black and red wires beneath. I then attached this to the amp, black going in black and red going in red. I then attached these to the speakers in the same way, having to adjust the positioning of the speakers slightly as the wire wasn't long enough. We also plugged the speakers into the plug sockets available on the bar.

Sound Research:

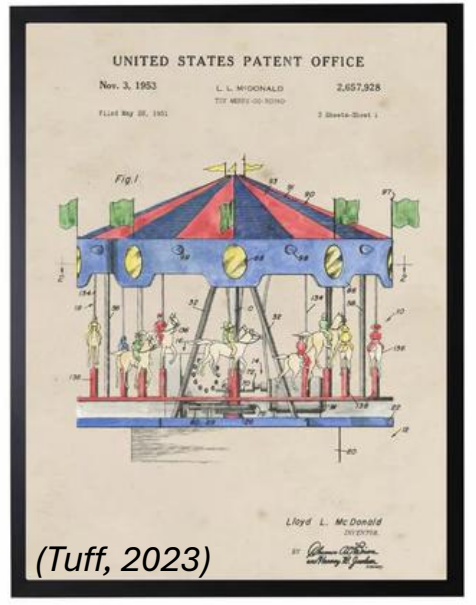


(Getty Images, Year Unknown)



(Skulldigger, 2018)

Invented in the 1790s, they were a pneumatic tube with 2 discs, 1 rotating and 1 stationary. Installed on police cars in the 1920s, being extremely heavy and reducing speed significantly. Electric sirens only emerged in the 1960s. *(Popa, 2016)*



(Tuff, 2023)

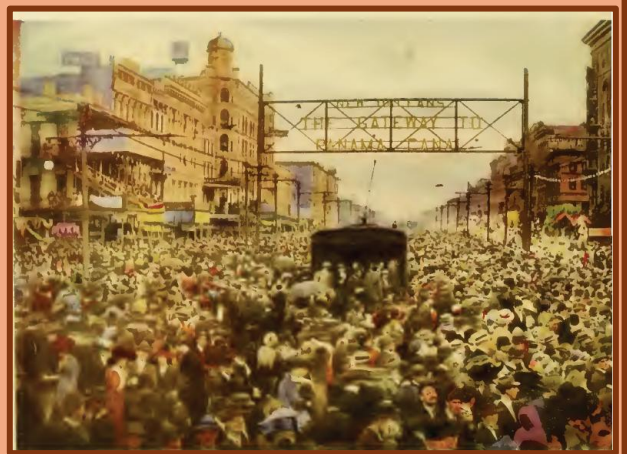
With the invention of the steam engine came the danger of it exploding due to building pressure, the steam whistle was invented as a warning for when the pressure was too high *(Age of Revolution, Year Unknown)*

This eventually developed to become used as an end of shift signal for factories and mines, there is a suggestion of Zero's workplace having a factory atmosphere.

By the late 1800s they were powered by steam engines and then later changed to electric power, with the organ moved inside of it.

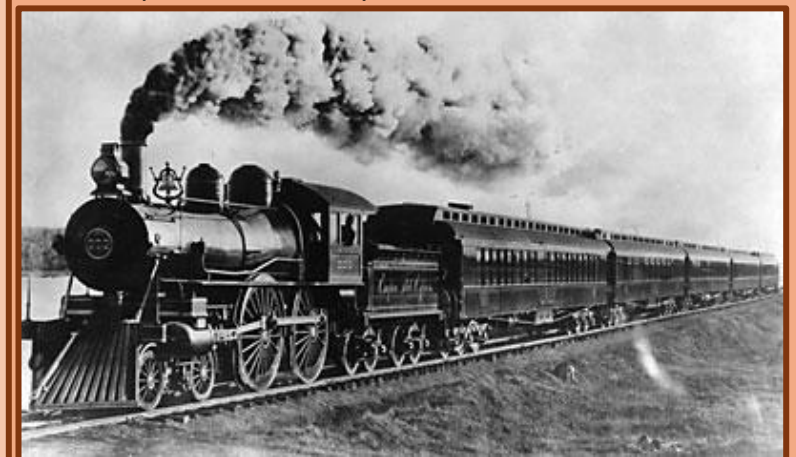
I managed to find a 1920s piano for a Merry-Go-Round, but I wanted an organ for a more traditional sound as well as historical accuracy.

1700s Merry-Go-Rounds became used in entertainment with a live band and powered by men, 1800s they arrived in America, and the industrial revolution allowed better machinery and mass-production *(Carnival World Museum, 2013)*. *(Carson, 2006)*



Mardi Gras became a national celebration in America after 1917. *(Vargas, Year Unknown)*. Whilst New Year's Eve in the early 1900s was celebrated with singing, drinking, parties, and crowds *(EBSCO, 2024)*- fireworks arrived in America in the 1600s *(Hernandez, 2024)*.

Despite developments in trains physical appearance and the emergence of electric locomotives, steam locomotives were still very common and would have been a more familiar sound to people in the 1920s. *(How Stuff Works, Year Unknown)*



Q-Lab Soundscape:

Before starting my soundscape, I listed every single sound effect that is mentioned in Scene 2 of the script. I then collected a variety of options for each sound effect, making notes on what I liked and disliked and notes on which were period accurate. I discovered that in America, on Armistice Day, they play 'Taps'. This is something that has been played by the military since 1862. Although it is now called Veterans Day, in 1923 it was called Armistice Day. *(Kendra, Year Unknown)* I then played these sound effect options to the rest of the group, discussing what we thought of each one and my notes, before highlighting the final options for each effect, as you can see in the document to the right. I checked before beginning the Q-Lab file whether I would need to ensure I used copyright-free effects, but I didn't need to for this module. I created my file on Q-Lab and uploaded all of the effects, putting them in the order of the script. After working on this for a bit I realised I would need to change the order to achieve the build up of tension I wanted. I blended some of the tracks, such as having the sleigh bells fade into the steam train, which I was really happy with. I then experimented and adjusted the levels, fades, and timings of all of the tracks until I was happy with my soundscape. I looped some of the tracks in order to have the part I wanted over a certain length. If I had more time I would have added an underscore to the beginning of the soundscape, which I would interrupt with the factory steam whistle. I sourced both of these sounds but ultimately decided to focus on the breakdown. I also really wanted to experiment with panning the sound, but again I didn't have enough time for this.



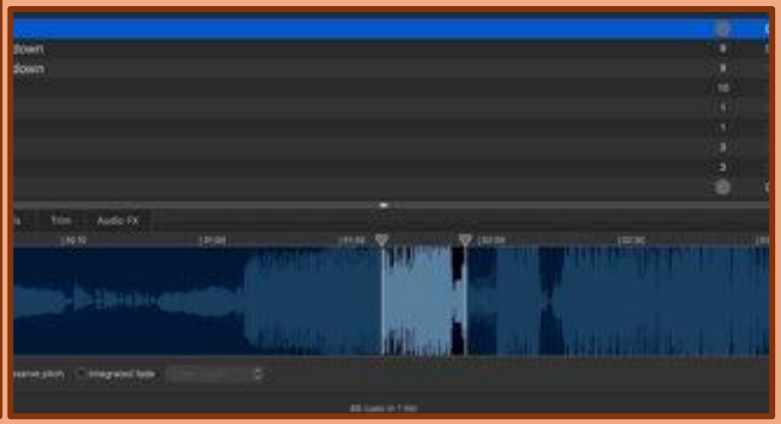
Research 1920s background music for a silent film - atmosphere accurate
1st one, cosmic plodding, keystone deluge, mister exposition, plucky daisy, royal banana, villainous treachery (favourite)
https://youtu.be/dJ-Su4utvm8?si=I8vV43GZDh4OTQT5

Steam whistle:
https://youtu.be/9CFUMJE0wAM?si=ISJmzEz4u_i8m9jH (factory whistle) this is the favourite as it's very factory
https://youtu.be/J-d8UJXfXc?si=4YuAzgQmfnfn2t0L (more old fashioned sounding) this is more dystopian and creepy so it's also an option
https://youtu.be/ta04KrKsxII?si=t1E0Fh06JVyAFZxj (another one)

Merry-go-round music:
https://youtu.be/CYXqpc6iHnY?si=Yv2UvjLxH8hmJIln (distant amusement park)
https://youtu.be/L35ajMeIZMA?si=ndjpGYKmeBKzx2Zj (just the merry-go-round)
https://youtu.be/CwoTk2i4goA?si=2NnSwrk6xBmOqt3I (more creepy)
https://youtu.be/Z8b7PeRqT7g?si=UloOlcvBTrnNXciC (1920s piano)

Wind:
https://youtu.be/RBUtBrk7yzo?si=iQBN8PaIS6ZuRTns (howling wind - quite soft and consistent)
https://youtu.be/TIycpvvmI1U?si=7Ee0uI-QRME1WNwU (wind and snow storm)

I really like the overwhelming atmosphere I created and would love to create more soundscapes in the future.



Building the Table











We built the table out of 12mm plywood scraps, first marking out a 1.5’ x 4’ rectangle to cut diagonally with a rail saw to become two triangles. Before starting on the legs, we sourced two chairs so that we could base the height of the table around them

Deciding the table would be 80cm tall, as this would create an awkward hunch which we were aiming for. We made the legs out of the same plywood, cutting two 80cm strips for each leg, and arranging them perpendicular to each other to provide support and stability. We screwed these together with 40mm screws.



Once we had finished the table and stood it up, we realised it wobbled and wasn’t a stable surface.

We decided we would add cross bars to the legs to better support them.





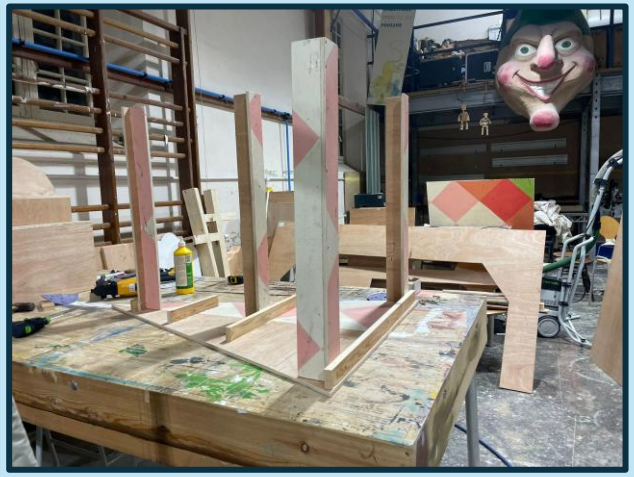




Before attaching anything together, we made sure to sand each piece we had cut. After flipping the triangles to become one whole, we connected them with 4 bars across the bottom, applying wood glue to each piece before screwing it together, to ensure a secure hold. We drilled from the top of the table intending to fill the holes later. We attached all four legs next to the support bars so that they had something to be screwed to. Using 50mm and 30mm screws to make sure they wouldn’t come through the other side. We used clamps to secure the legs in place whilst this was happening.







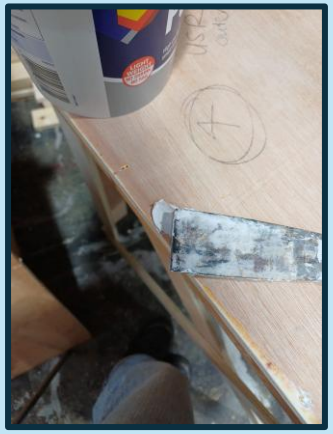
We then sanded down where we had cut, with an electric sander, later on Anne and Charlie sanded the varnish off of the chairs so that they were ready to be painted.



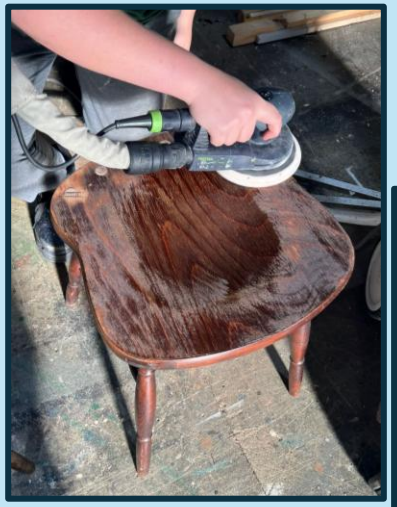
Me and Alice sourced the two chairs pictured below from the furniture store, although we were looking for stools, we couldn't find a matching pair. We chose these chairs instead as I suggested that we could cut the backs off of them to make them stools. Me and Anne then went about cutting the backs off with a Multi Tool, this was the first time I had ever used this tool, and I found it surprisingly smooth and easy.







Annie filled in the screw holes of the table with Polyfilla which was left to dry before we sanded it down for painting.







Above are images of the table before the cross braces were added, and me and Alice sitting at it to test whether it was an appropriate height.

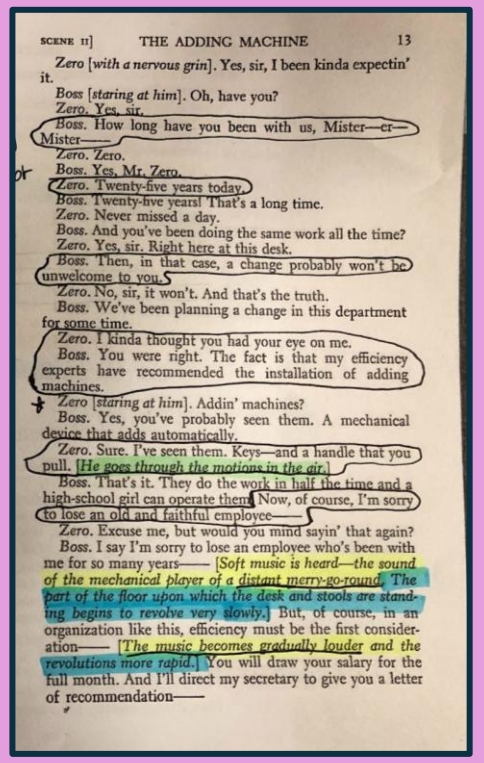
Filling the Table and Making the Chairs:

Storyboard and Title Cards:

We wanted to create a storyboard in order to plan out our short film and to then be able to make a shooting schedule. Before this, we decided to go through the script and choose which bits of dialogue we wanted to include, as we would be using title cards in the traditional style of a silent film, so we didn't want too much information on them. To the right is the script with our chosen dialogue circled, next to which are some example title cards which Alice created on Canva. I love the title cards as I really feel they fit the old-fashioned silent film style. We then began discussing the shots we wanted, going through the script and blocking together (using the notes I took in our first read through).






SCENE 11] THE ADDING MACHINE 13

Zero [with a nervous grin]. Yes, sir, I been kinda expectin' it.

Boss [staring at him]. Oh, have you?

Zero. Yes, sir.

Boss. How long have you been with us, Mister—er—Mister—

Zero. Zero.

Boss. Yes, Mr. Zero.

Zero. Twenty-five years today.

Boss. Twenty-five years! That's a long time.

Zero. Never missed a day.

Boss. And you've been doing the same work all the time?

Zero. Yes, sir. Right here at this desk.

Boss. Then, in that case, a change probably won't be unwelcome to you.

Zero. No, sir, it won't. And that's the truth.

Boss. We've been planning a change in this department for some time.

Zero. I kinda thought you had your eye on me.

Boss. You were right. The fact is that my efficiency experts have recommended the installation of adding machines.

Zero [staring at him]. Addin' machines?

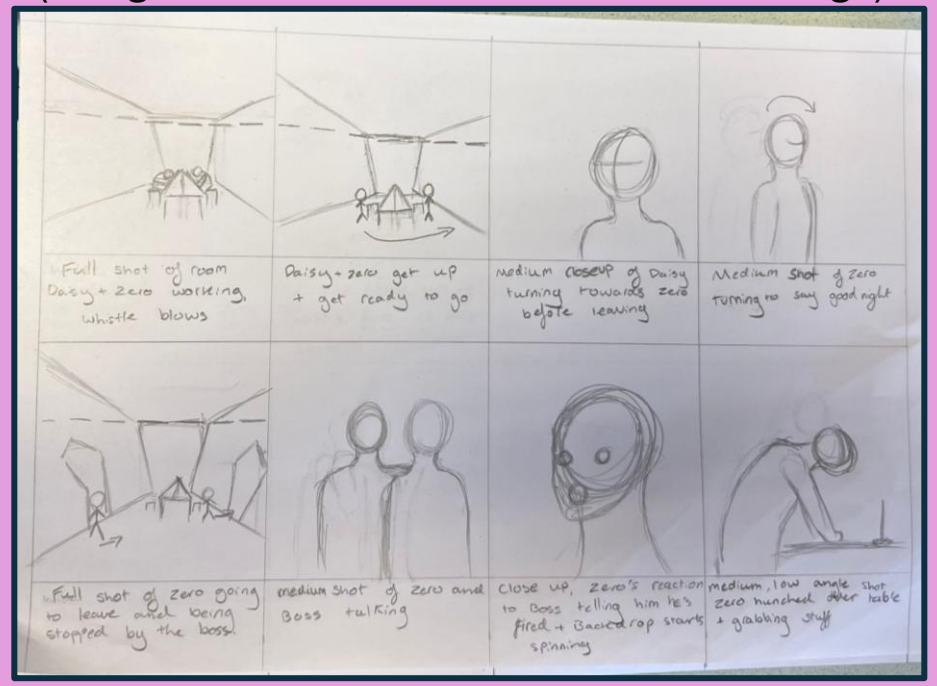
Boss. Yes, you've probably seen them. A mechanical device that adds automatically.

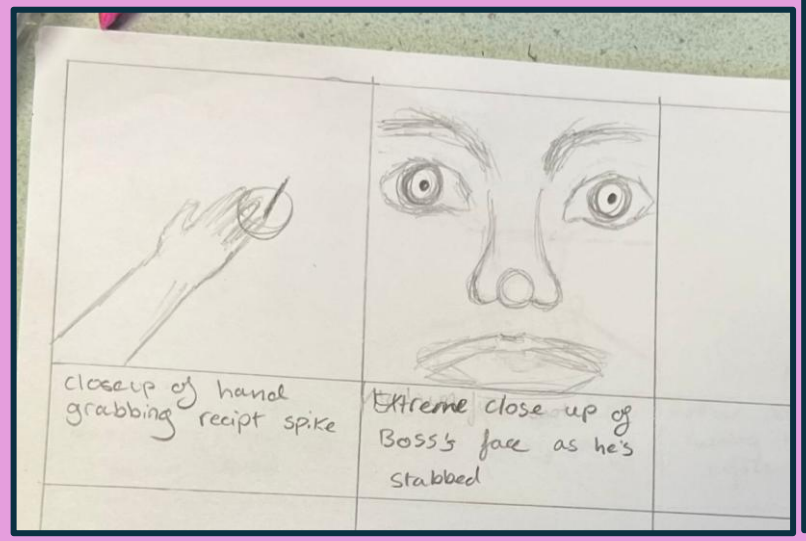
Zero. Sure. I've seen them. Keys—and a handle that you pull. [*He goes through the motions in the air.*]

Boss. That's it. They do the work in half the time and a high-school girl can operate them. Now, of course, I'm sorry to lose an old and faithful employee—

Zero. Excuse me, but would you mind sayin' that again?

Boss. I say I'm sorry to lose an employee who's been with me for so many years— [*Soft music is heard—the sound of the mechanical player of a distant merry-go-round. The part of the floor upon which the desk and stools are standing begins to revolve very slowly.*] But, of course, in an organization like this, efficiency must be the first consideration— [*The music becomes gradually louder and the revolutions more rapid.*] You will draw your salary for the full month. And I'll direct my secretary to give you a letter of recommendation—





We started by focussing on what we wanted to include and show, then choosing what type of shot and angle we wanted. Making sure to have establishing shots, as well as a variety of medium shots and close ups for parts such as Mr. Zero grabbing the murder weapon. During the camera test, we later experimented with low angle shots for Zero bent over the table.

Renting Equipment and Risk Assessment:

Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Risk Assessment Form – Part B

Activity[1] – Each individual activity you are proposing:			**Location** – where this activity will take place:	**Dates / times**:
Rigging lights Painting canvas Setting up the set Filming			Halliwell (room H007)	24/11/25 – 01/12/25
Hazards[2] List what could cause harm from this activity *e.g. falls from height, trip hazard, fire, etc.*	**Who exposed** List who might be harmed from this activity *e.g. staff, contractors, contributors, public, etc.*	**Risk**[3] For each hazard, decide level of risk as if you were to do the activity without your controls	**Control measures** For each hazard, list the measures you will be taking to minimise the risk identified *e.g. appointing competent persons, training received, planning and rehearsals, use of personal protective equipment, provision of first aid, etc.*	**Risk**[3] For each hazard, decide level of risk once all your controls are in place
Manual Handling	Alice Pearson Anne Hyde Cameron Hobby Annie Picton Charlie Field	Medium	For moving heavy equipment such as the Steeldeck and flats, this will be done with two or more people as needed. Everyone in the studio will be wearing the correct PPE – Steelcap boots	Low
Object falling	Alice Pearson Anne Hyde Cameron Hobby Annie Picton Charlie Field Sarah Gardner Mary Leng Alaya Kow Eva Bible Ant Burns Dave Atkinson	Medium	All lights rigged to the truss will have the safety chain applied as well as a hand-tightened clamp.	Low
Falls from height	Alice Pearson Anne Hyde Cameron Hobby Annie Picton Charlie Field	Medium	**We will be using a ladder. When using a ladder, one person will be at the bottom to steady it. The person on the ladder will remain 3 points of contact.**	Low
	Charlie Field			
Equipment storage	Alice Pearson	Medium	**The shooting location is walking distance from my accommodation where it will be stored in a locked room over night and when not needed on set.**	Low
Equipment security	Alice Pearson	Medium	**I will be responsible for the handling and transportation of equipment. It will be stored in my locked room over night and when not needed on set. When it is on set and not being used i.e. over lunch, it will be stored in a secure room where possible, if not I will take it back to my accommodation.**	Low
Competence	Alice Pearson Anne Hyde Cameron Hobby Annie Picton Charlie Field	Medium	**Those responsible for the equipment will have an induction in using the equipment.** We will never work alone in the space.	Low

As we wanted to film our piece as a short film, we decided to rent some equipment from the Digital Media course. We already had a camera as we were going to use Anne's, so we borrowed a tripod and some lights. These were LED lights which you could adjust the temperature and brightness on the back of. We decided not to use these in our presentation and to keep them just for filming and to experiment with lighting for film, as this was something we hadn't explored before.
Alice organised the kit rental and created the risk assessment you can see to the left, it is longer than these images, but I have cropped it to make the writing more visible.



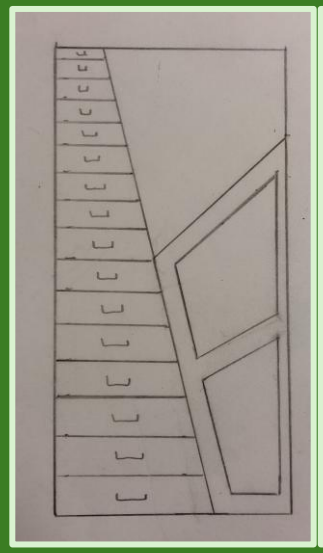
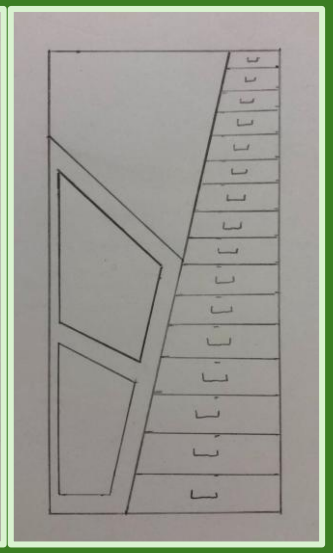
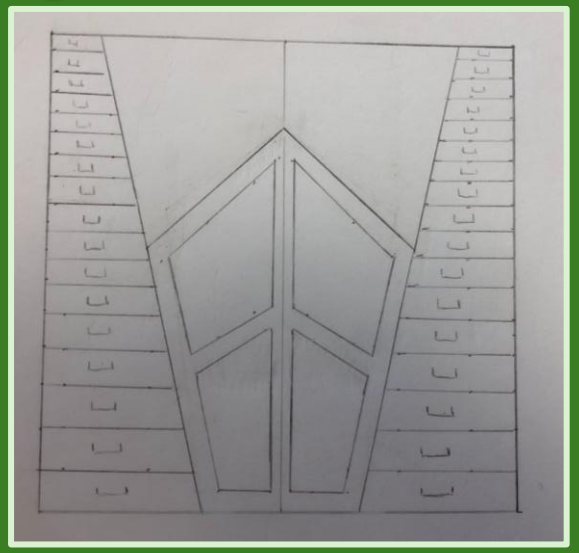
We discussed as a group the risks to our get-in and the work we planned to do in the space, all contributing to the precautions we could put in place to prevent these.



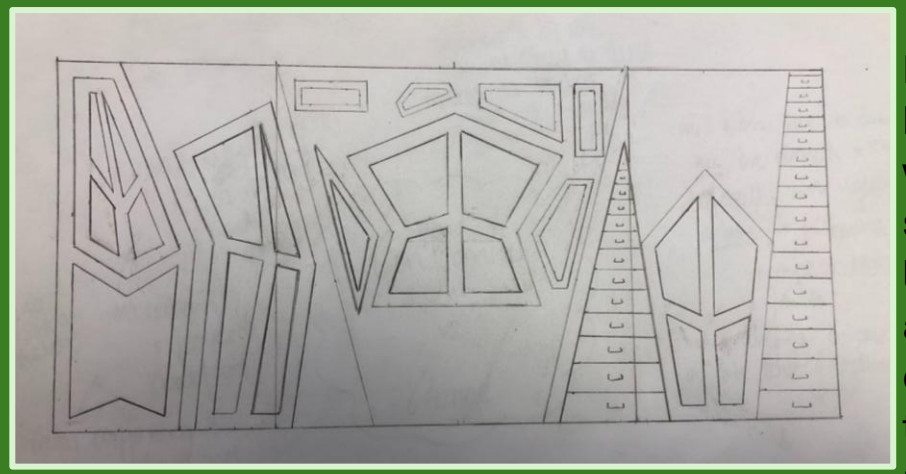


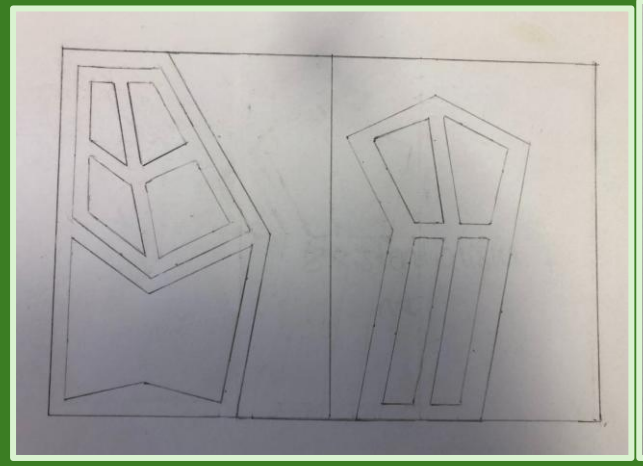
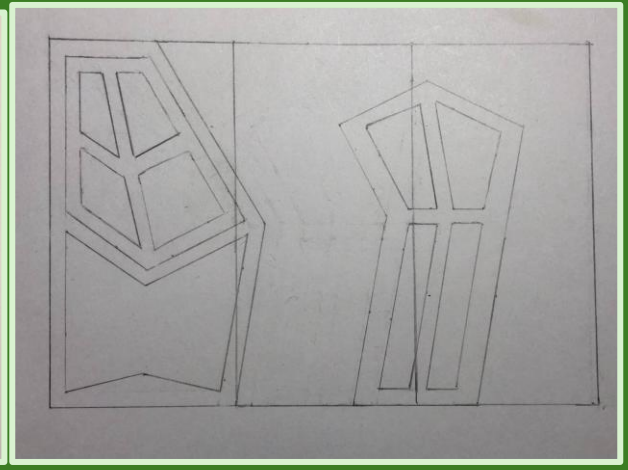
For example, as you can see above some of the risks were with equipment storage, manual handling, objects falling from height, and people working at height. Some of the measurements we put in place were safety chains on the lights, the appropriate PPE and the correct lifting methods.

Scenic Art Designs:

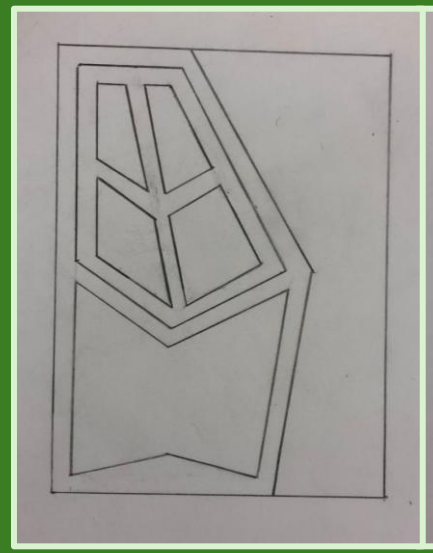
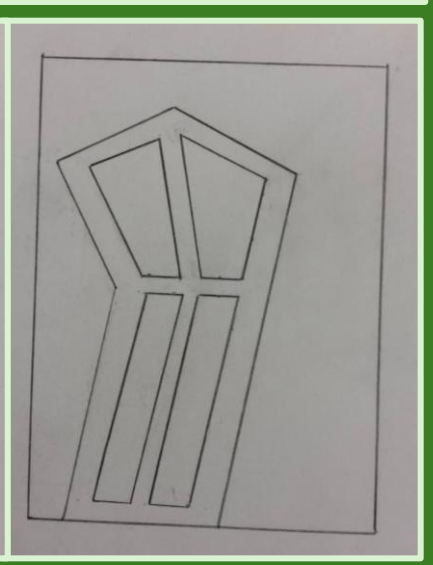
I created the scenic art designs for the project, which I really enjoyed as I'm specifically interested in scenic art as a career path. I based these designs off of the final design sketch we made, working in a 1:25 scale as it was easier for me to work smaller first before enlarging it, helping me figure out the proportions



I did a lot of trial and error with the proportions, researching various things such as the average height of a door, trying to make the measurements as round a number as possible to make the marking out process.

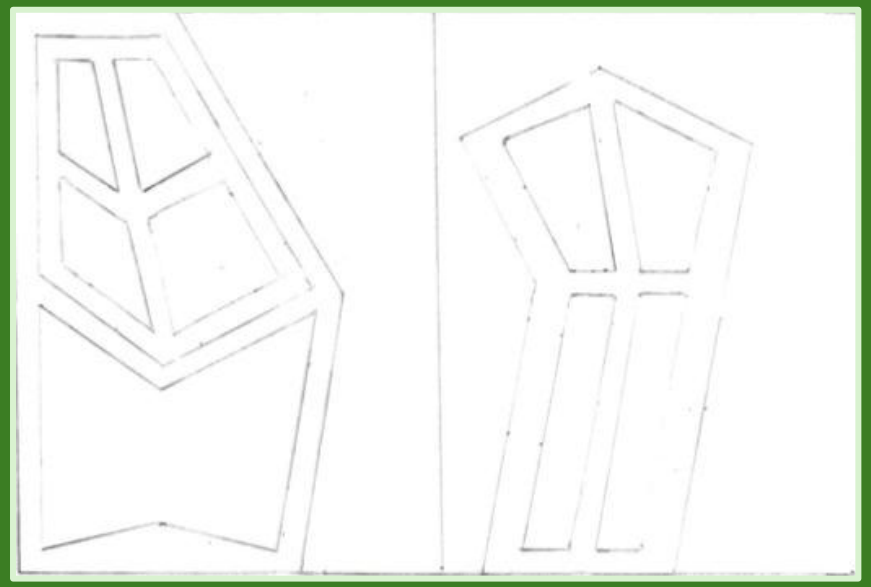
I found the design process of the rotating backdrop quite intimidating, beginning with the window which would remain stationary the most, I then marked out lines for the angles the flats were leaning at and altered the measurements of the other walls to fit these in. Having to squish them quite a lot but I think I managed to make them look 'natural'.

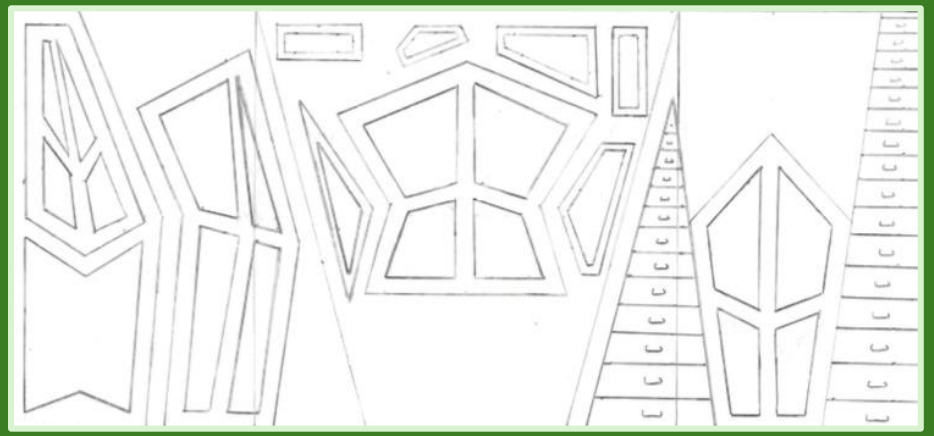



I separated all of the design drawings into the separate flats, having to redo the larger flats as we changed it from three 4' flats into two 6' flats. I sketched the flats separately as I felt it would help with marking out and painting the flats accurately to prevent mistakes and save time.

Scenic Art CAD Drawings:

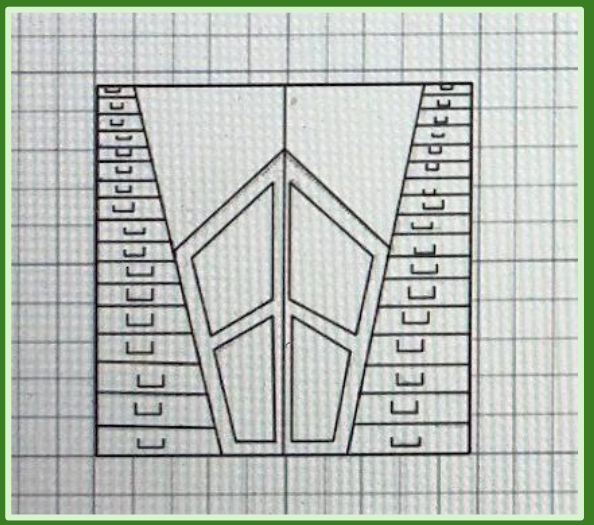


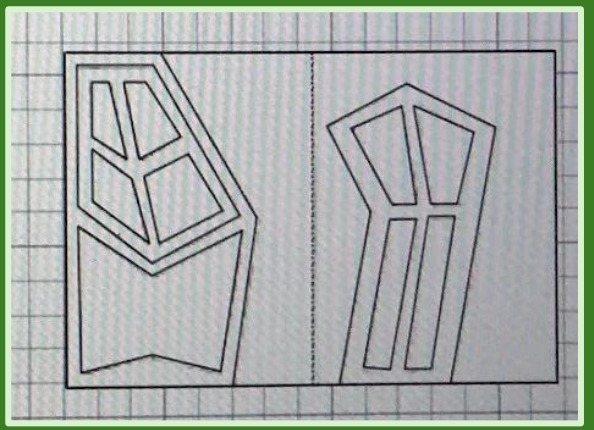


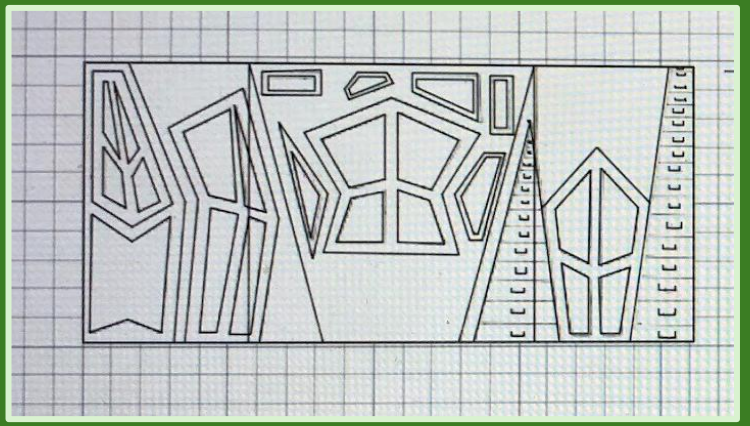


I was really glad I got the chance to work on my CAD skills more during this module, I learnt a few things about copying and rotating images, as well as the inserting and exporting process!

My plan to apply the scenic art designs to the model, was to print them out in 1:10. So I started by scanning my drawing and downloading them to my laptop. I then inserted the images into CAD. I had some trouble figuring this out, I eventually had to crop the images to the exact outline of the flats. I then made a line in CAD which was the exact length of our flats in 1:1 (so 2440mm for one side and 3660mm for the other). I then inserted the image and enlarged it to match and sit along that line. I then drew lines over the image to recreate it quickly in CAD. When exporting I had to separate the images into separate pages and print to A3 to make it fit in a 1:10 scale, unfortunately there was a problem with the printing and so they printed onto A4 and were no longer in scale.







Refined Scale Model:









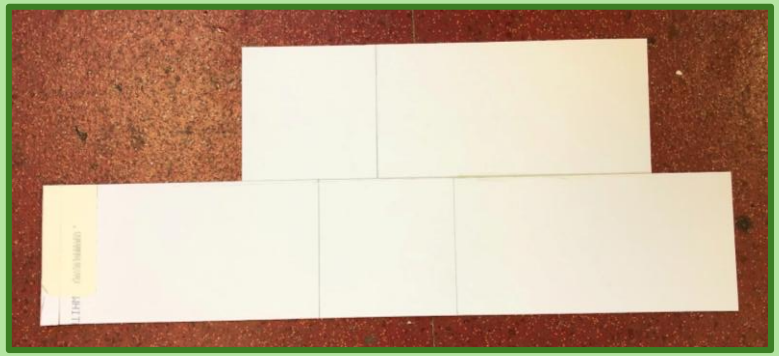
We decided to reuse the flats from our first scale model, to reduce waste of resources and time. And these flats and the rotating backdrop model were already in 1:10.

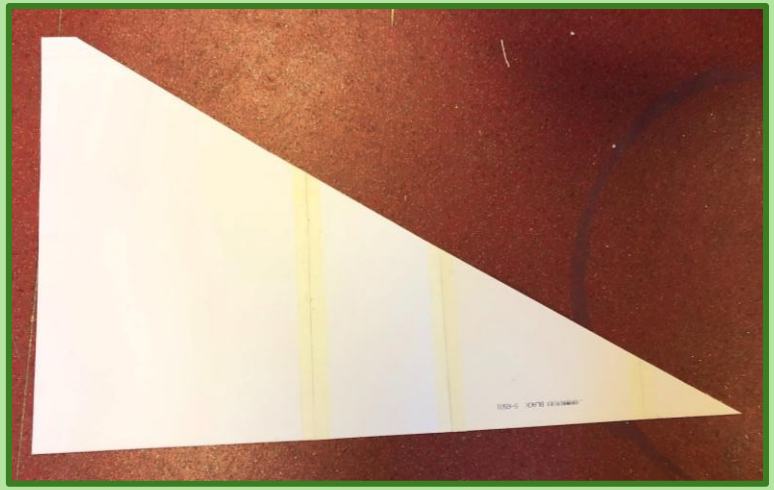




I created the refined scale model so that we could paint the scenic art designs onto it. I measured out our new steel deck arrangement and the new floor plan, after the fire walkway changes. I did this in 1:10 and then painted the floor black.

I then created the new chairs and table, recreating the chairs we sourced and the table we created, including the cross bars for accuracy. I really enjoyed getting the opportunity to work on the refined model, as I feel all of my previous models have been rougher versions and so I wanted to practice both refining my skills, but also creating a model that is smooth and clean and painted. I painted the chairs and tables with black and white, and we based the table's paint design on this model.







Painting the Refined Scale Model:

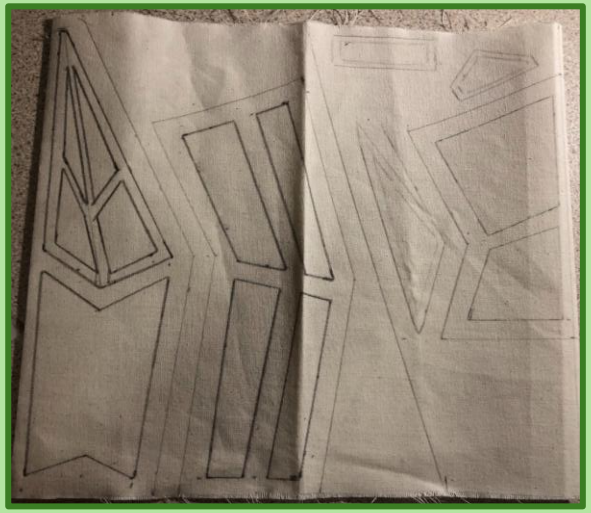


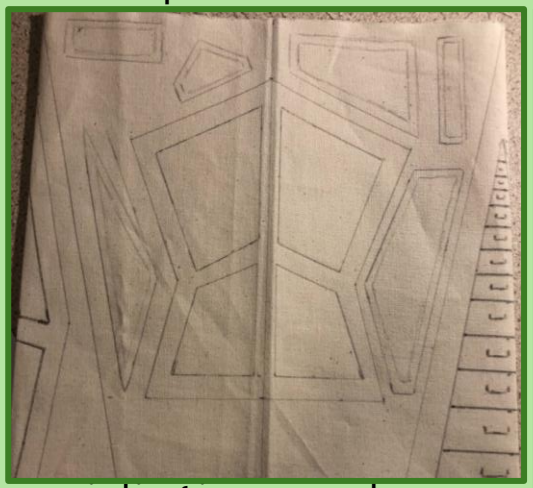
I marked out the stage left flat on the model, and then Alice took over with painting it and marking out and painting the stage right flats. I focussed on finishing the floor design and the rotating backdrop.

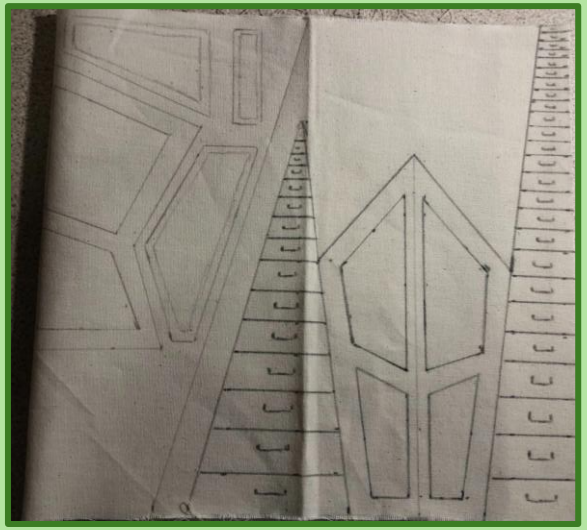
Sketching my design onto the calico fabric from the original scale model. I found there were some inconsistencies with the measurements. This might be due to the original scale model being slightly inaccurate in its measurements. Because of this I decided that when we got to marking out the actual backdrop, we should begin with the centre of the image (the window and picture frames) and then work outwards from there, in case any changes needed to be made and so it wouldn't affect the primary image.



I then designed the cityscape out of the window, taking inspiration from the dystopian city in Metropolis (1927) and an exaggerated expressionist version of New York City, as this is where the play is set. I tried to include tilted skyscrapers and a jagged feeling, making them appear layered on top of each other and overcrowded. Attempting to create a claustrophobic feeling. I also added a rounder building as I wanted some variety in the cityscape, as we're painting in monochrome, I felt like the city could blend together if there wasn't enough variety. I decided on the direction the sun would be facing and painted all of the buildings accordingly, having the highlights on one side and the shadows on the other in order to create depth.







All of the painting of the model was done with black and white acrylic paint from the paint store.

Painting the Refined Scale Model:

This mood board was created by Annie Picton

CinemaWaves (2023), Sanza (2022), IMDb (2025), Listal (2025), InspiredPencil (2021) →

I designed the floor for our set before painting the model, as we knew we wanted to explore the painted shadows and light that are featured heavily in The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. I drew out the steel deck in 1:25 and marked out where the flats would sit on the deck. I then measured out where the glass partition and the windows would sit in relation to the floor and roughly drew out the shape the light would come through. I also marked where the doors would be and drew a spikey design around them, in order to draw motion and attention to those spots and to dramatize the entrances and exits.





Before designing the floor and beginning to paint the model, we decided we should create a specific scenic art mood board, taking most of our inspiration from The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari due to its extreme expressionist style.

I was really happy with how the painting of this came out, I feel like I mimicked the style of German Expressionism quite well and that the lights coming through the glass looked quite effective. I wasn't as happy with the doorway design, as I felt it didn't add to the design in the way I wanted it to. If I could do it again, I think I would have designed a shadows around the table, mimicking the shadow the bulb above would create.

Final Refined Scale Model:



We were all really happy with how the refined model came out and could really start to see our design and vision coming together, this was my first time making a refined model and I think it really helped in the process to envision it before construction.





I would love to make more refined models in the future to improve my modelmaking skills, as well as to aid my design process.



Stabilising Table and Sanding it and Painting it:



Me and Annie worked on the cross braces whilst the rest of the group worked on other things.



We cut the 12mm ply into strips, marking it by holding it against the table and then cutting it at a 45 degree angle using the chop saw.







Unfortunately, the angles didn't work as we weren't putting them in an exact square, so we redid these by marking the angle against the table. Attaching these with a staple gun. I then sanded the paint off the table ready for painting whilst Annie hand sanded the small corners.









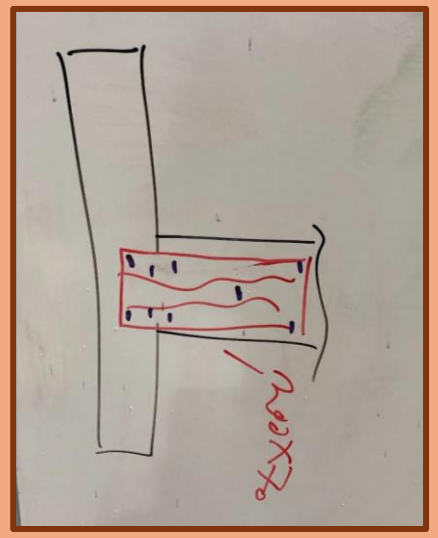
Anne and Charlie sanded the rest of the varnish off of the chairs and began painting the first few layers of paint.

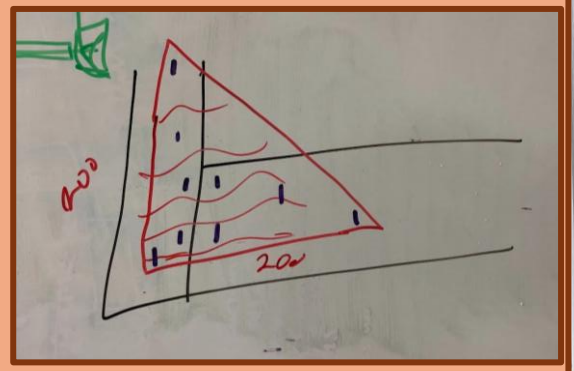


The cross bars made the table a lot more stable, and we were really happy with how it came out.



Cutting Lists:

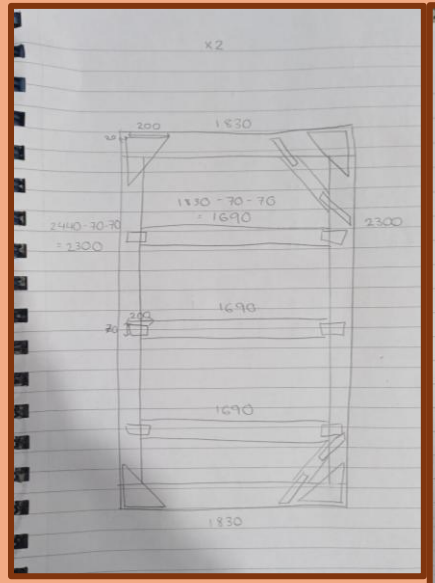


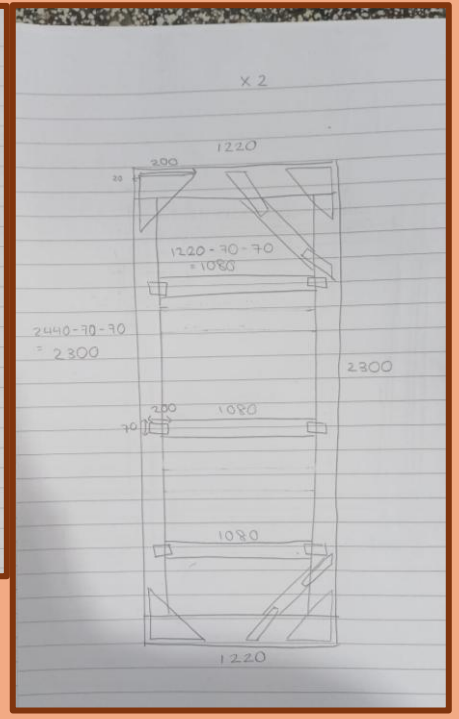


These drawings were made by Dave Atkinson.



These sketches were drawn by Annie Picton.

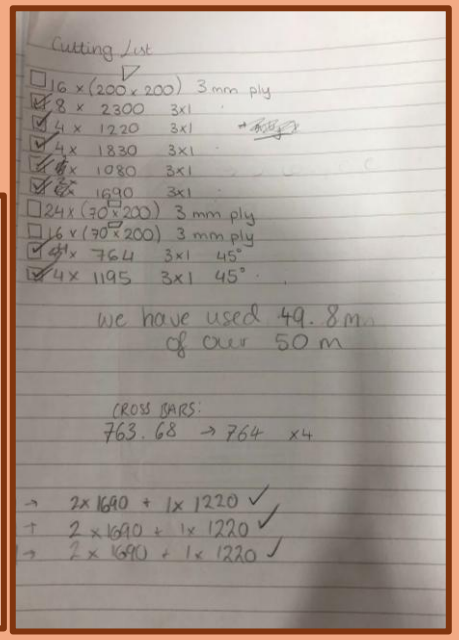




There is a specific pattern you have to place the staple into the plywood plates. You firstly need to ensure you place the grain of the plywood perpendicular to the joint of the frame. The pattern can be seen in the drawings to the left, this pattern ensures the plywood is secure, having four in the corners, four around the joint, and an extra one in the middle.

After all of our orders had arrived, we could begin the flats. To make our cutting list, we went through the process of making canvas flats with Dave, as we hadn't made this style of flats before. The main differences between these and plywood flats are the plywood plates you place on top of the joins, the cross bars at the top and bottom, and the Broadway style you place the 3x1 wood. The cross bars have to be on the same side of the frame, at a 45 degree angle, meaning they will come to halfway across your flat. These will help when sizing the canvas, as it will support the frame as it tightens so that it keeps its shape. You have to make these flats in Broadway style, lying the 3x1 flat so that you have the surface area to glue the canvas to.

We were then ready to create our cutting list, sketching out the frame as seen in the images above to note what measurements each part needed to be. Making sure to take away the width of the 3x1 from the height of the stiles and from the width of the toggles. Drawing in all of the plywood plates and the cross braces, which we then used CAD to calculate the measurements of. To the right is the final cutting list.



Cutting the Wood and Problem Solving with CAD:



After making our cutting list we began measuring and marking out our wood, trying to be as space efficient as possible. Making sure to use as many of the off cuts as possible. We cut these with a chop saw.
We soon realised that we wouldn't have enough wood, as when planning our order we didn't account for cross braces. In the future we should make sure to research any new construction methods we haven't done before, as there may be slight differences that make a big impact on the amount of wood we need to order.

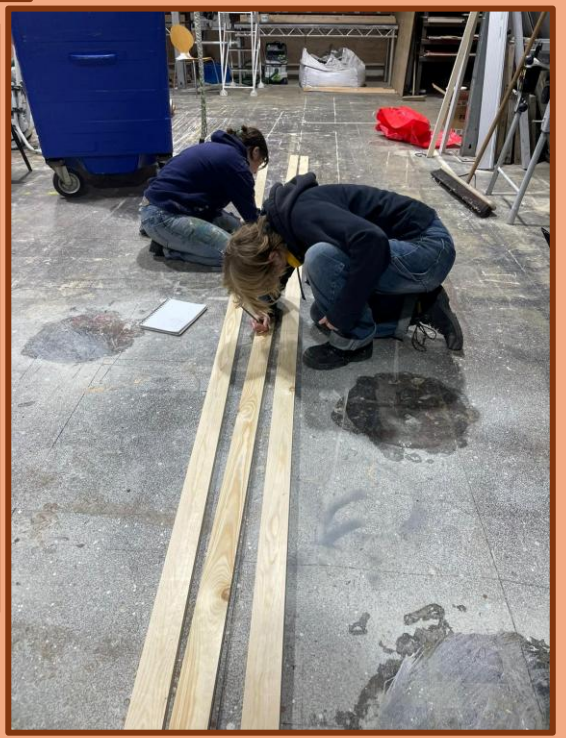






This is where we were able to use CAD to problem solve, as our sketches accounted for 3 toggles on each flat, and these needed to be 610mm away from each other. Alice used CAD to see how many toggles we would need and as we had the cross bars it was decided we would be able to use one toggle on each. This meant we now had enough wood to cut both the toggles and the crossbars from.

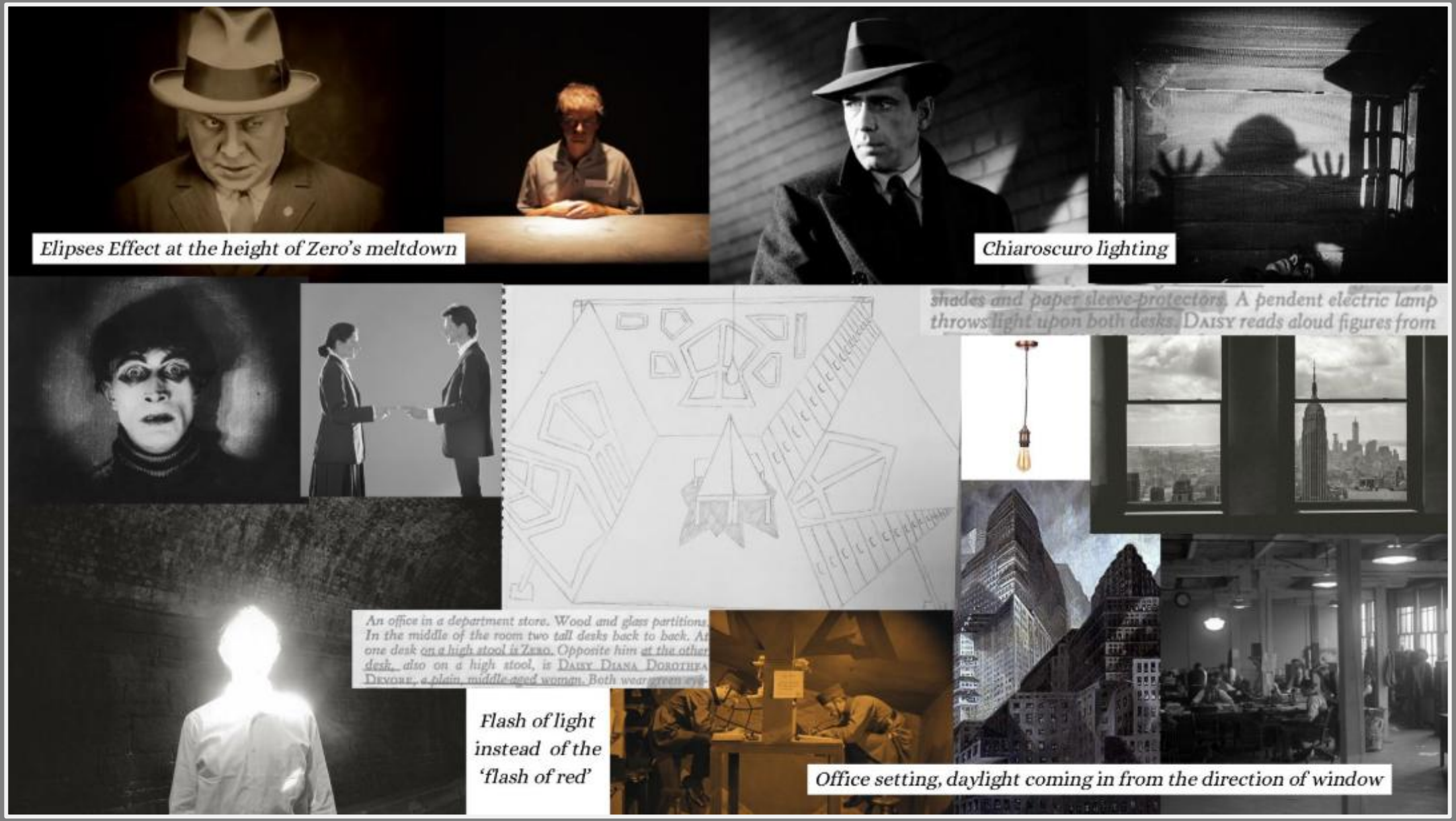
We measured each piece of wood after it was cut to check it was the right length, there were only 3 that needed to be recut. We also made sure to mark a straight line with a set square on the end of each plank of wood, as it can't be guaranteed to already be straight.



Lighting Mood Board:

Before beginning the lighting design and rig, the group discussed our vision for the lighting and Alice created a mood board. Heavily focussing on Chiaroscuro Lighting techniques of high contrast and dramatic shadows.

Taking some inspiration from the use of shadows in Nosferatu (1922) and film noir movies, as these make use of dramatic shadows in black and white. Our lack of colour in the set and in the film meant a lot of the focus would be on the lighting techniques.



Rigging Lights and the Lighting Plan:





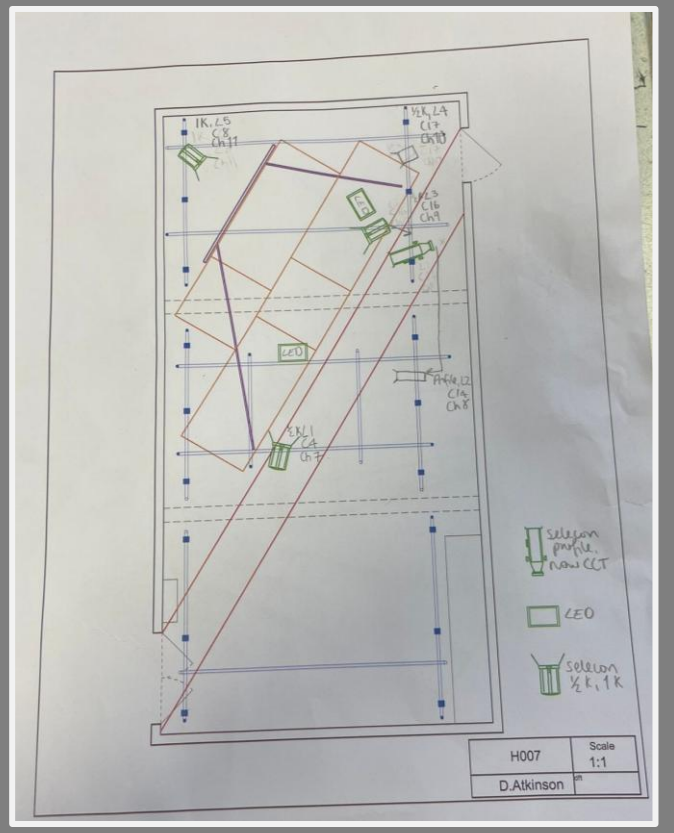




In the end we decided to only use three Fresnels, as we liked the effect created more than four.



Alice rigged the lighting and drew the lighting plan on CAD as she wanted to explore lighting design, she did this with members of the other group who were also doing lighting. As well as Chiaroscuro lighting, Alice wanted to explore the film lighting technique of three-point lighting, which includes a back light, a fill light, and a front light. This creates an even wash of light and can easily be switched to Chiaroscuro by only turning one of these lights on (for example, the backlight would create a dramatic silhouette of the character). We chose four Fresnels and one Profile, in order to get wide coverage and to create a dramatic spotlight effect. Alice positioned these to create her three-point lighting effect, having the backlight mimic the light coming from the window in our set. We refocussed these later when our set was up, so that the backlight would reach over the backdrop and after we had blocked the scene so knew where the profile needed to point. The Lighting plan can be seen in the image to the right. This is combined with our set so that we can see where the lights are in relation to the walls and stage area.



Building the Flats:

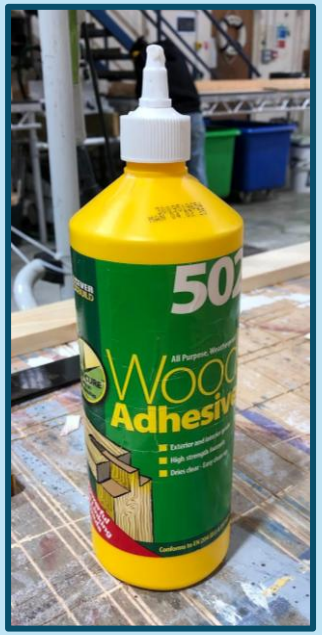




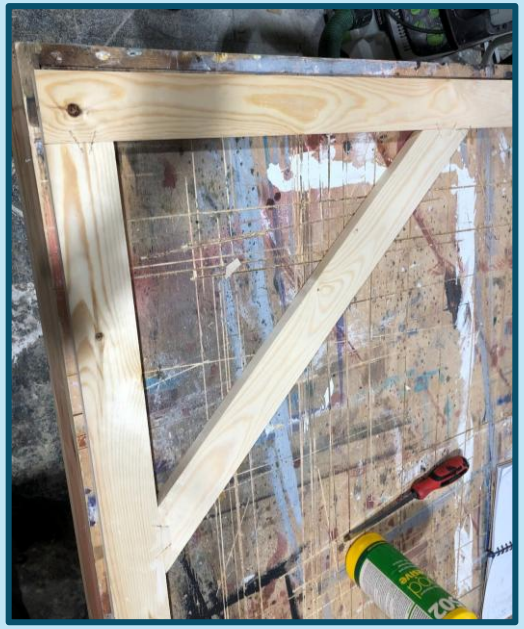




Close up of cross bar joined with a wiggle pin.



Before we started to build the flats, we re-measured all of our wood to double check we had everything we needed. Me and Anne then began building the flats whilst the rest of the group cut 3mm plywood with a table saw for our plywood plates. Me and Anne used a set square for each corner, applying wood glue before attaching the out frame together with a wiggle pin gun, used in a ‘V’ shape so that it went against the grain and secured it. We then attached the toggle in the same way, marking the halfway point before attaching it. Some of the flats were bowed quite significantly in the middle, so the whole group worked to push the sides together to attach the toggle correctly. We could then move onto the cross bars.



With the longest length already cut, we cut the edges of the cross bars to 45 degree angles with a chop saw, attaching them to the flats in the same way as the rest of the frame. Once the plates were cut the whole group then worked to complete all of the four flats needed.



Building the Flats:

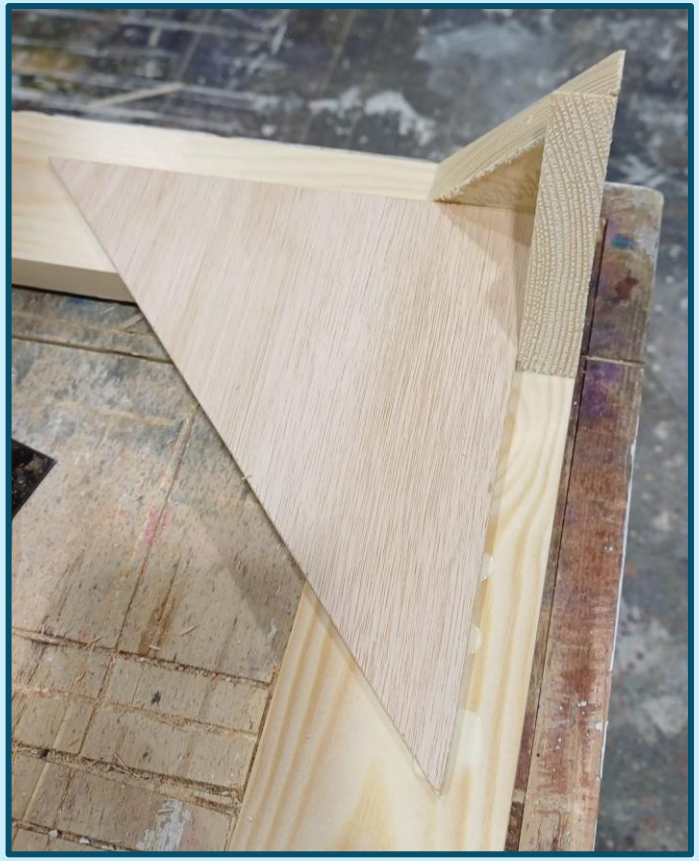




Before the flats were complete, we had to attach the plywood plates to every joint, with the grain of the plywood going perpendicular to the join of the frame, as you can see in the images below. This creates strength in the join, if the grain was going in the same direction, it would be weak and not add any support to the frame at all. The plywood triangles, for each corner, had to be 200mm x 200mm, whilst the plywood rectangles had to be 200mm x 70mm. Each plate had to be 20mm away from the edge of the frame, we used offcuts of 3x1, as you can see in the image below, to position each plate. Applying wood glue to each piece before securing it with a staple gun. We followed the staple pattern mentioned earlier, one staple in each corner, four staples to secure around the join of the frame, and an extra staple in the middle of a large area.



I really enjoyed having such an active part in the construction of the flats, I feel like I built my confidence significantly with both using tools and constructing flats.

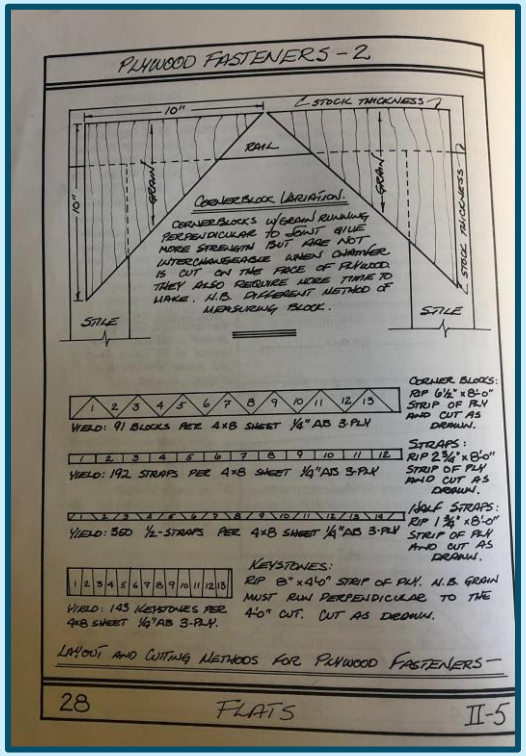




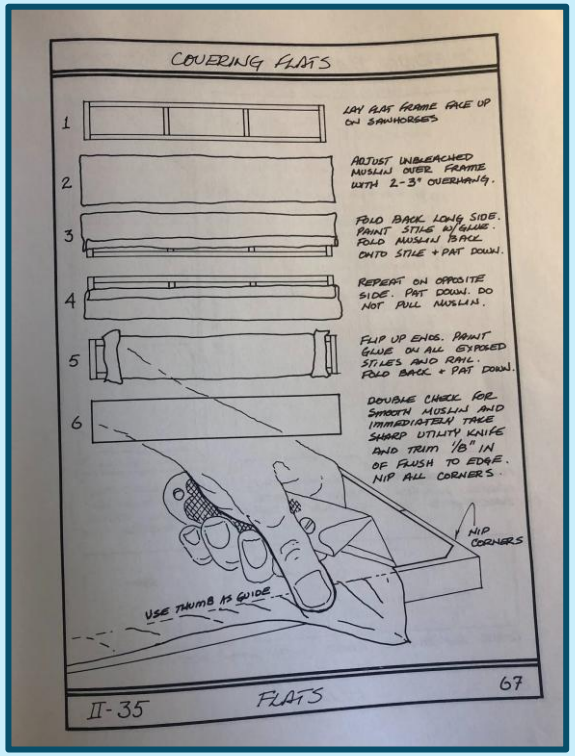
Research into Flat Construction:

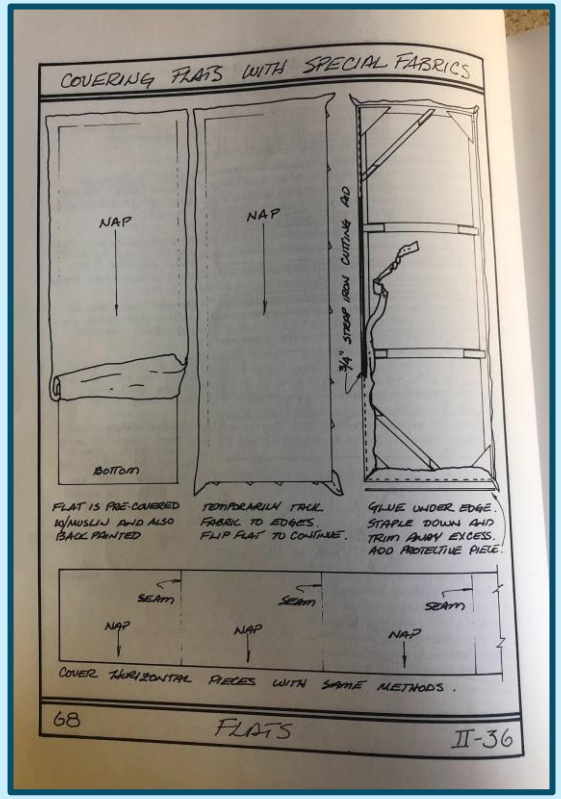
Page 19 onwards details plywood plates → plywood fasteners.
Wiggle pins / corrugated fasteners are seen as temporary until the plywood fasteners secured.
Advising using off cuts to mark from the edge.
Tacks used to be used a lot in canvas flats to secure with glue, as scrubbing down the scenery after shows softened the glue and tacks would hold it in place until it dried again.
Advises to nip the corners of the canvas as the corners wear down the fastest

(Raoul, 1997, p. 28)



(Raoul, 1997, p. 67)





(Raoul, 1997, p. 68)

When trimming it is to prevent the canvas from being rubbed away and helps the flats sit flush together
You can use a product called wall size when sizing the canvas
You can back paint the fabric to make it opaque and prevent light shining through, if we wanted to save on budget we could have bought a lightweight fabric and back painted it.
(Raoul, 1997, p. 66-67)

Canvasing the Flats:



When canvasing the flats, we laid out the canvas fabric over the flat before making a cut with scissors at the point we wanted. We made sure not to have too much excess over each side to make sure we didn't run out of fabric. We were then able to rip the rest of the fabric by hand, as it follows the seam in a straight line. When glueing the fabric down, you only apply glue to the outer frame, as if you apply it to the toggles and cross bars the fabric will sit weirdly when you go to size it.



When applying the glue, you want to use a large amount so that the glue bleeds through the fabric as you press it down, this is how you know it's binding. We added water to wood glue to dilute it.
We applied the glue like this to each flat until all were covered, going over any bits that weren't bleeding through enough so that we had a secure bond between the frame and the fabric.





We then left these to dry over night before coming back to size them. I really enjoyed this part of the process, as it was interesting to learn how canvas flats are done.





Sizing the Canvas:



To prepare the canvas for sizing, we went around the edge of the fabric with a knife, cutting 3mm in from the edge of the frame. This removed all of the excess fabric.







We then glued down any parts that weren't full secured, some corners and some edges, with more wood glue. Before going around the whole edge with a strip of wood glue, smoothing it down with our fingers to seal the edges of the canvas fabric.

They were now ready for sizing.





We were able to work as a team, with someone cutting off the excess, someone applying the glue, and someone smoothing it down. Meaning we worked quickly and efficiently.





Sizing the Canvas:









We diluted wood glue down with water to a single cream consistency, so that it could be easily worked in to the fabric weave but was still thick enough to pull it taut. We had to work quickly when applying the glue, working it into the fabric thoroughly with a wide paintbrush, with multiple people working on one at a time. Making sure we had enough glue before we started as you can't stop halfway through.

The larger canvases were more challenging, as by the time you got to the other end the fabric was already being pulled taut. We managed to get all four canvases done with an even coverage. I loved this part of the process a lot, it was really strange how quickly the fabric was pulled tight and how it can be done with only watered down wood glue!

You can see the comparison of how loose the fabric was at the start compared to the end, we then left these to dry.





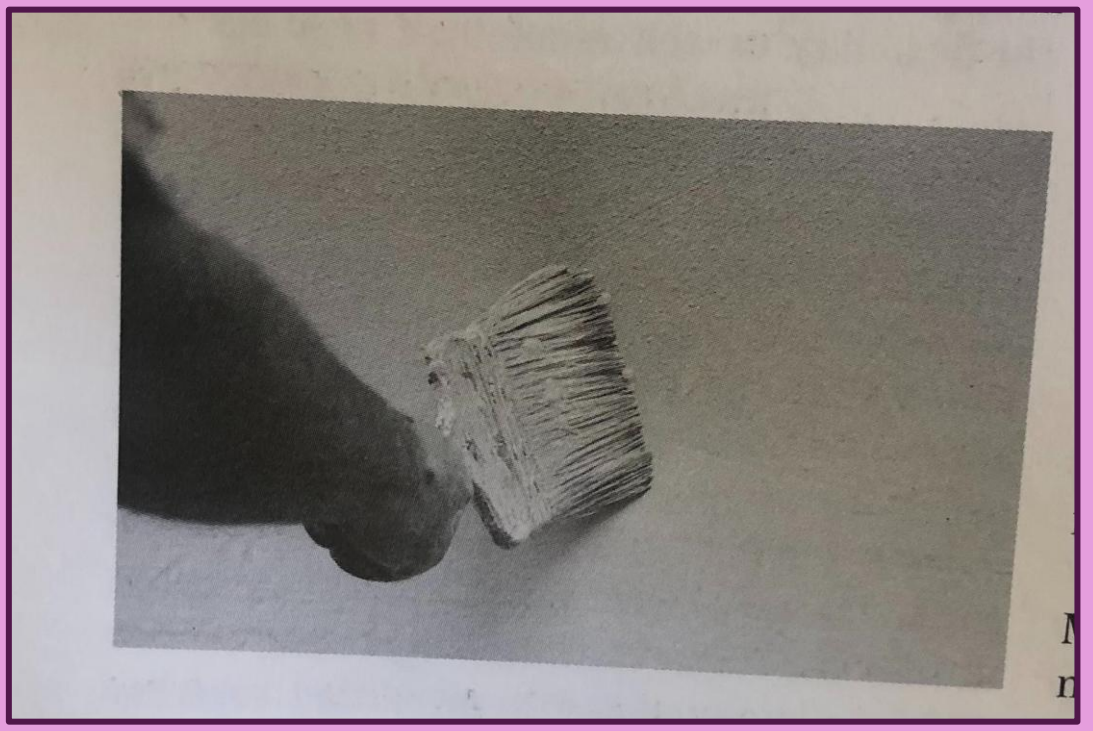




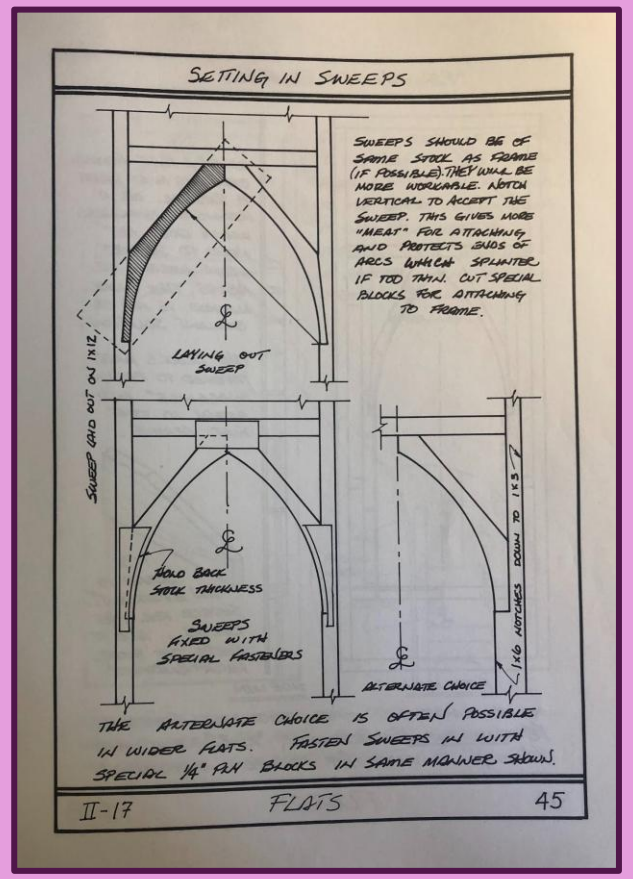


Priming and Painting Research

Calico is a good alternative to canvas as it's cheaper, but is not as durable.
Recommend using a long piece of string once right angles are established, we used a chalk line which I think was more effective as we didn't have to draw along the string, the line was placed for us.



(Troubridge and Blaikie, 2002, p.112)

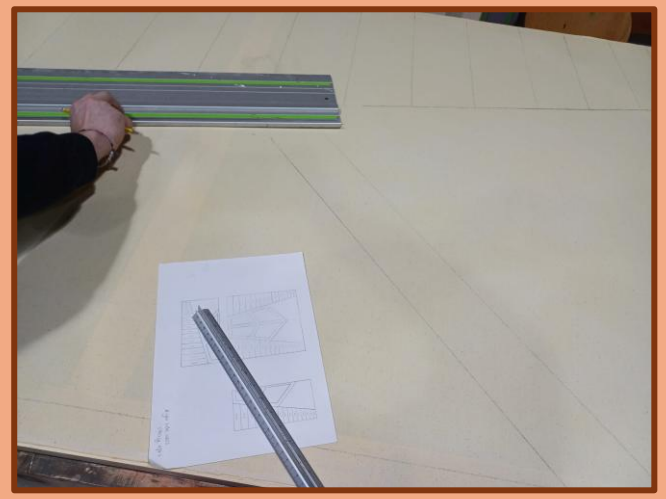


(Raoul, 1997, p. 45)

Priming the surface helps prepare for layers of paint by shrinking the fibres to create a smooth working surface, after being nailed down so that it doesn't shrivel.
Advises that all canvas fabrics need priming, sizing the canvas with glue counts as a primer *(Troubridge and Blaikie, 2002, p. 101-110)*.

I would be interested in building an archway flat at some point, it seem really interesting to use curves in flattage.

Marking out the Flats and Painting:



Whilst me and Alice finished painting the refined model, Annie marked out the flats using the 1:25 scenic art drawings. Using a set square and a rail to ensure straight lines and 90 degree angles. We could then begin painting, for the flats we used the emulsion paint from our order, as these wouldn't need to flex and it was the cheaper option. Whilst for the backdrop we had to use ROSCO's scenic art paint, so it wouldn't crack when bending.

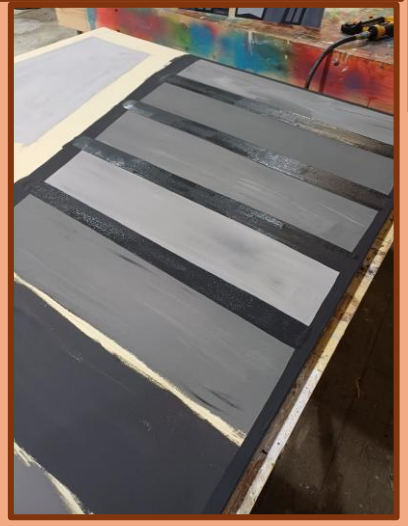
The rest of the group began painting whilst I redrew the 1:25 drawing of the backdrop. After changing the height of the backdrop to allow for handles, it was no longer accurate. We were able to stick to our schedule by moving onto the flats whilst I worked on this. We created various shades of grey and labelled each one in separate mixing pots, to stay organised and for colour matching later on. Once the foundation colours were dry, we applied masking tape to create straight lines for the smaller details. Using our 1:10 scenic model for reference.



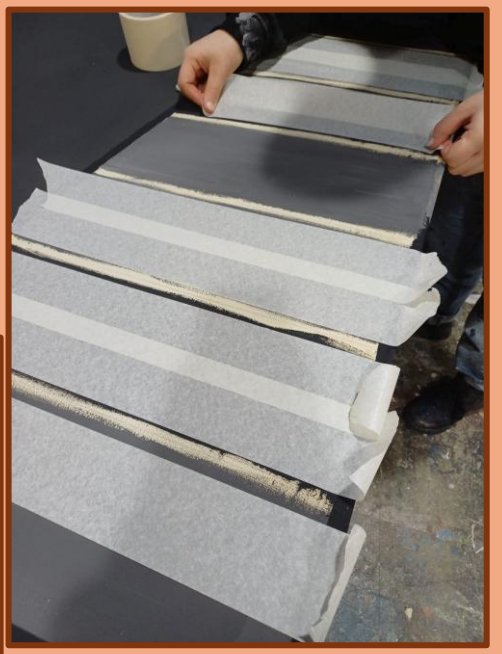












Painting the Flats:

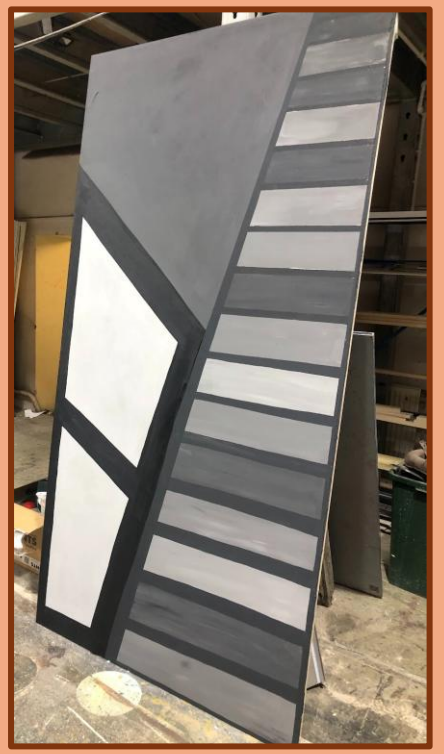




The painting of these was a lot quicker than we expected it to be, which was helpful as the painted backdrop took a lot longer to complete than the flats.



Whilst the smaller flats were drying, we swapped them over for the larger ones, these stood to the side so that we could begin painting the rest.





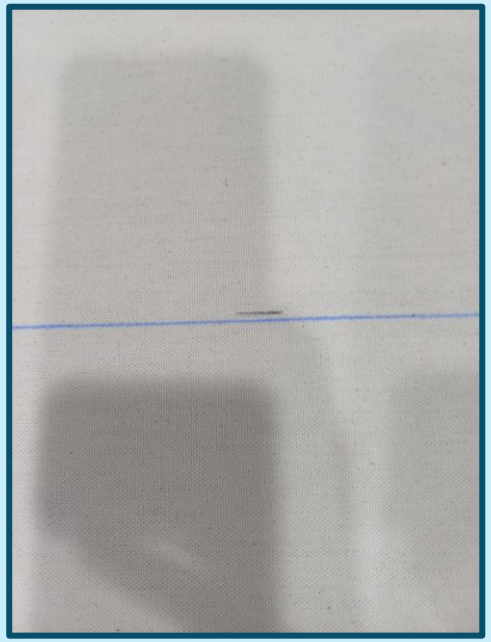
Once the smaller ones were dry, Annie went over them with a small brush, to paint on the drawer handle details in white. These came out great and really added to the overall look, I think the drawer handles make the flats more interesting to look at and help balance the white of the table and white of the glass partition on the other wall. Once these were dry, we planned on going over them in the space, adding some dry brushing or cross hatching to create texture and expressive brush marks to help connect our design to the German Expressionist style.

Pinning and Measuring the Backdrop:



We unrolled all of the fabric and measured out the length we needed, we then adjusted the height to allow for room for the handles on the PVC tubes. We used planks of wood to draw straight lines as the fabric was so large.





We also used a set square to get it as straight as possible, and a chalk line which we follows the grid in the workshop floor to mark a line across the length of our fabric, before cutting with scissors down to size.

Once we had the right length, I marked out a seam allowance along both edges, of 25mm each. I then went to redraw the 1:25 scenic art drawing so that we could begin marking up.



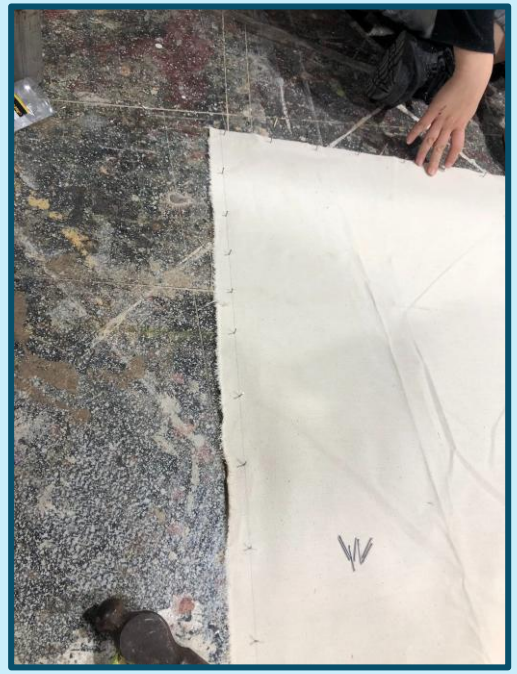
We then had to pin it down to the floor.





We used 25mm pins, spacing them a hands-width apart, starting from once corner and working our way out either side. This was so the fabric wouldn't shrink whilst we painted.





Preparing the Surface and Marking out the Backdrop:







Once pinned down, and before marking out, the surface of the backdrop needed to be primed. We used ROSCO's white scenic art paint for our base coat. Working it into the fabric in an even layer to help the layers of paint sit better.

I marked out the rotating backdrop whilst the rest of the group painted the flats, with Charlie assisting at some points. I started with the centre of the backdrop, marking the mid-point and drawing out the window, I then moved on to completing one end of the backdrop completely so that someone could begin painting it. Thankfully, some of the third years came to assist us in the painting of the backdrop, this was a massive help due to how little time we had. I managed to finish marking out the whole of the backdrop by the end of the day and began painting the picture frames around the window, with the third years having completed the side of the backdrop I had finished marking out first.







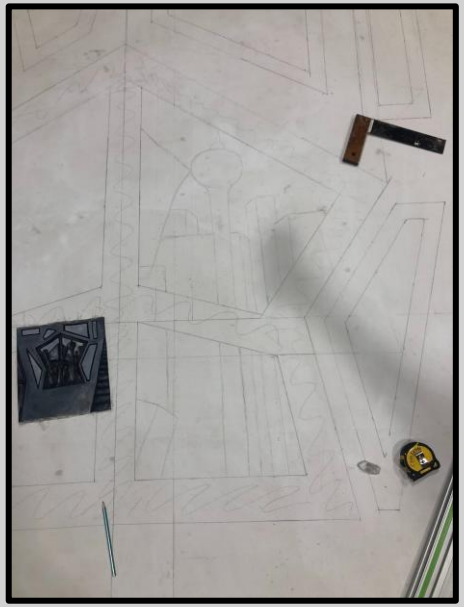


Painting the Cityscape:

Whilst the rest of the group worked on other parts of the backdrop, I painted the cityscape seen through the window, following the 1:10 scenic model, I decided to free-hand this part of the backdrop rather than measuring it out like the rest. I decided to do this because we wanted the backdrop to be inspired by the jaggedness of the backdrops in The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, and so I felt any inaccuracies would add to the atmosphere and expressionist effect. I used a ruler for some of the edges of the buildings, so that they would line up where the window frame interrupts them. Like my model, I decided the light was coming from the left-hand side and painted the buildings accordingly, having the highlights on the left and the deep shadows on the right. I swapped between a smaller detail brush and a wider one, creating rough and visible brush strokes with my blending and loose painting technique.

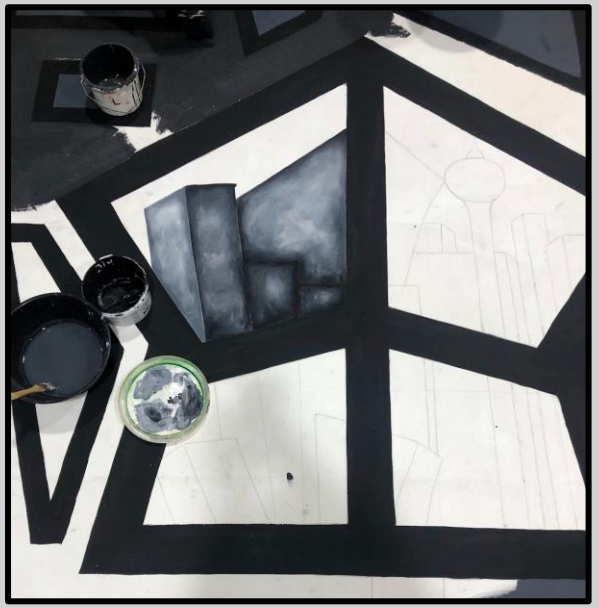








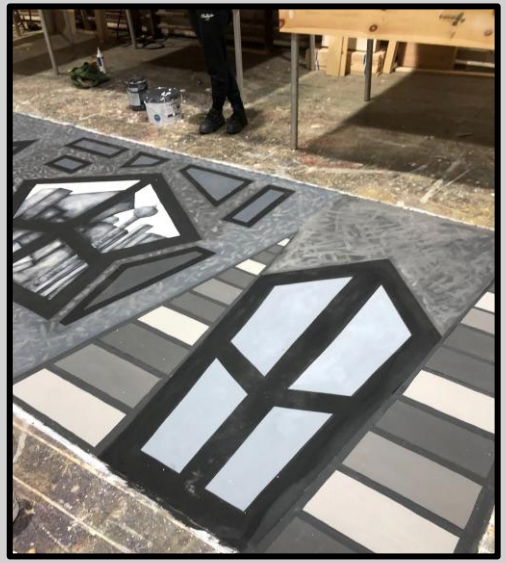
Although it took quite a long time, I am really happy with how it came out, I was worried the buildings might merge and blend into each other and become indistinct. But I think they stand out quite well. If I had more time, I would have gone over the shadows in black once the paint was dry, as I think this would create more contrast and depth.



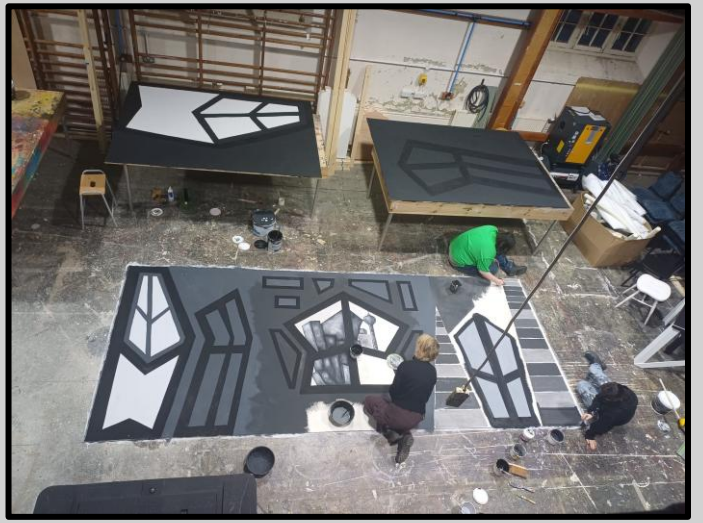
Painting the Rotating Backdrop:







Once we had finished painting all of the backdrop, we worked over the top of it doing a cross-hatching technique, this made all of the doors and frames stand out a lot more.







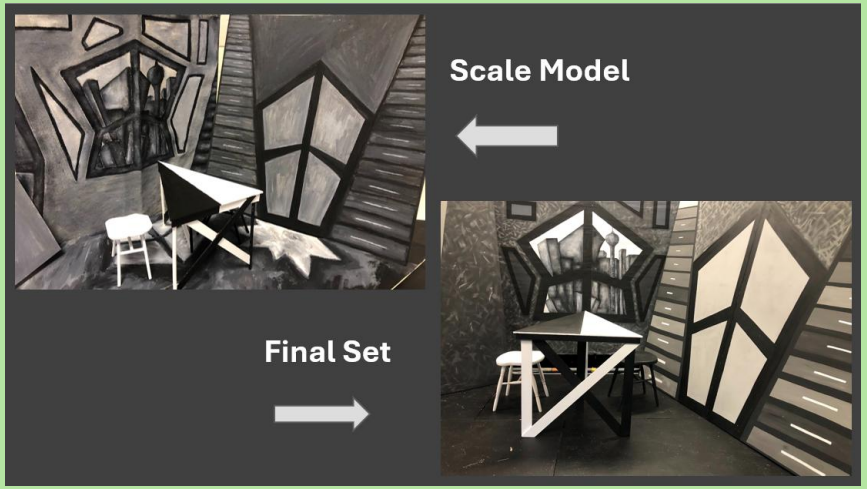
We then left it to dry overnight before unpinning it.
I really enjoyed working on the backcloth as I've never painted a backcloth before let alone something this large.
It wasn't as challenging as I though it would be, to make the whole painting cohesive, I found it really helped to keep standing back to look at the piece as a whole, every now and then.



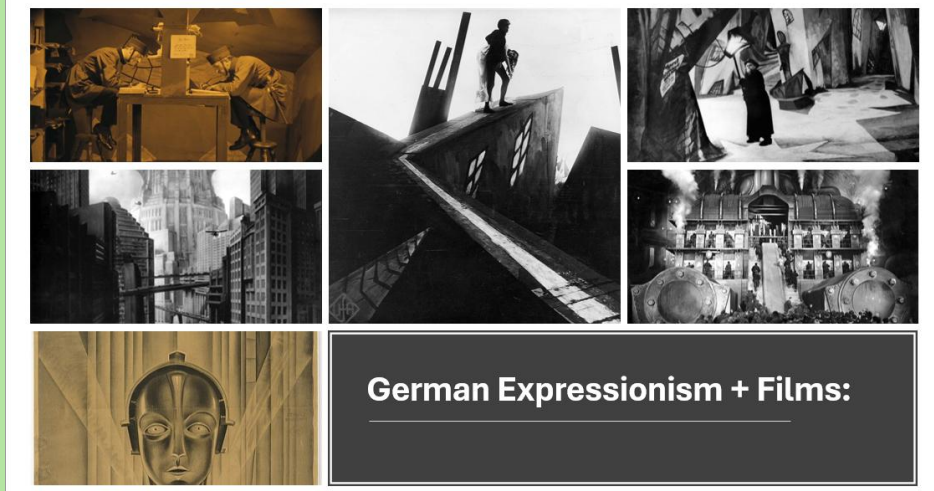


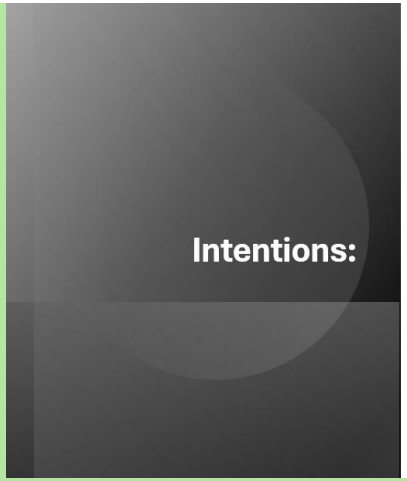
Presentation Rehearsals:

To prepare our presentation, we began by creating a shared document listing every topic we needed to cover, in this document we decided we would have everyone's script of what they would say, colour coordinating it to make it clearer. We also created a shared Power Point for our slideshow.

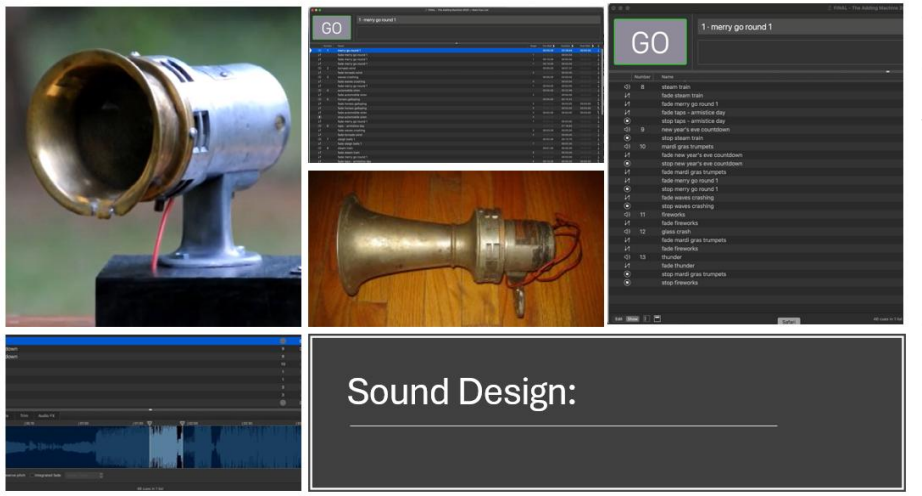


We then delegated topics which some people had taken more initiative in, for example Alice would discuss CAD and Lighting, I would discuss Scenic Art and Sound, Anne would discuss Costume, Charlie would discuss Props, and Annie would discuss Construction.





- Discomfort
- Distress
- Inferior
- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Fear
- Stress



We then equally distributed the rest of the topics so that we were all speaking for an equal amount of time. After writing our parts of the presentation we had a run through together where we discussed the parts we weren't confident on or wanted advice on. We then had a rehearsal presentation with Stacey which I was really grateful for as I felt a lot less confident on this presentation than the previous module.

Some of feedback was more specific to certain topics, but I was able to work on the feedback to discuss practitioners. I adjusted my presentation to include the designers of the movies I discuss, as well as expanding on parts of my Sound and Scenic Art sections to go into more detail on problem solving and what I would do differently.

Get-in, Securing Flats together and Preparing the PVC Tubes:

With one day to get everything set up for the presentation, we made one final to-do list and got to work. Starting by moving all of our flats, the backdrop, the table and chairs, and the PVC tubes down to the space. Charlie began painting the Copydex glue onto the PVC tubes in rings at short distances from each other, so it could dry while we worked.



Meanwhile, me, Alice, and Annie began securing the flats to each other. We used short offcuts of 3x1, attaching one at the top, bottom, and middle, and then two in between to level the flats out. We screwed these in, pressing them flat and as close together as possible.





This went quite well, with our main problem being a lack of space to work in, it took a lot of shape sorting and rearranging to work on each flat.











Painting the Steel Deck and Cross Hatching the Flats:





We then painted a layer of black emulsion paint over the steel deck with rollers, in order to cover up the previous year's scenic artwork, unfortunately we would no longer have time to paint our own floor design, so we decided to only cover it in black.

Once this was dry and another layer had been put on, we taped around the edge of the steel deck with white tape to reduce the trip hazard of the edge.

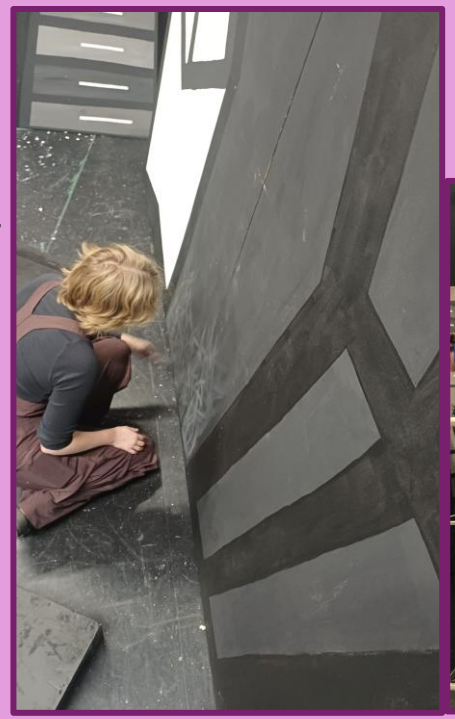


We then moved on to adding the cross-hatching to our flats, with Annie working at the top and me working at the bottom, we got this done quite quickly. We used wide flatliners in a random and expressive manner to achieve this effect. We adjusted the emulsion to a lighter shade for the smaller flats, as the background was a slightly lighter shade of grey. This made the flats look more German Expressionist as well as providing texture and depth to them, whereas before they were quite flat.





Whilst we were doing this, Alice painted an outline around the door, as we found it had dried a lot darker than we thought it would and wanted it to stand out more.





Pinning, Sewing and Completing the Rotating Backdrop:





To sew the backdrop, Alice and Annie marked the seam allowance on the underside of the fabric. Me, Anne, and Charlie then pinned it together inside out and helped hold the weight of it whilst Anne sewed along this line. Changing the needle to account for the thickness of the fabric and having to change it halfway through when it snapped. Anne backstitched regularly in case this happened.









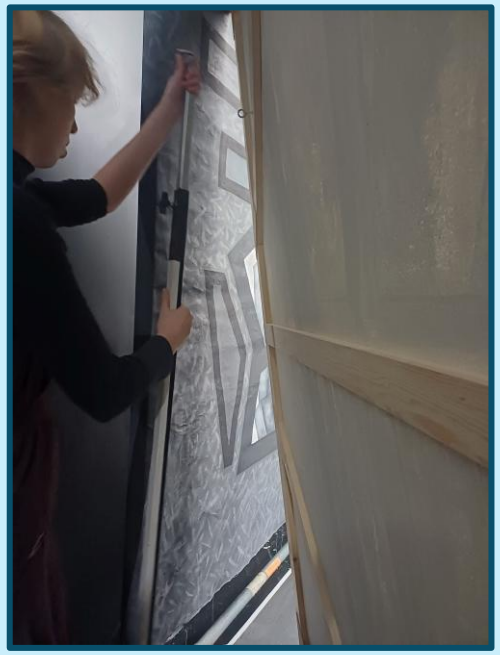
We then removed the top cross bar from the scaffolding frame we made previously and inserted the PVC tubes into the fabric before sliding them onto the frame. This was a really difficult part as the frame pulled the fabric so taut we needed as many people as possible to push it into place. We reattached the top cross bar and lifted it up, testing the rotation. Thankfully, it was successful! Although slow and stiff, the backdrop rotated as we had planned. With the help of Stacey and Dave, we attached the top of the steel scaffolding frame to the lighting bars, using scaffolding clamps and smaller poles.

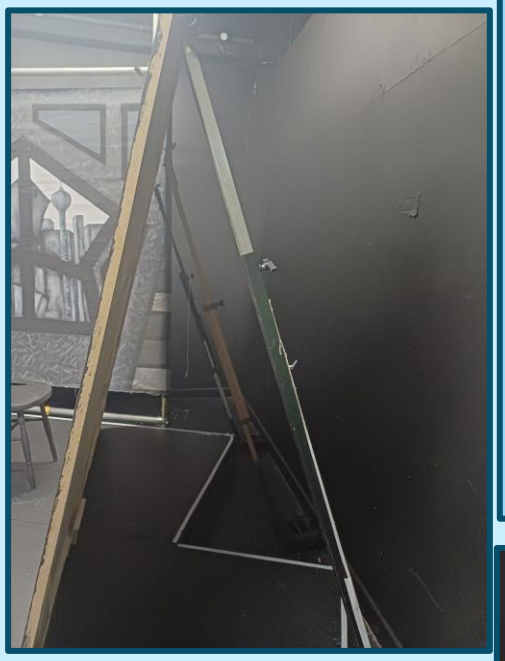




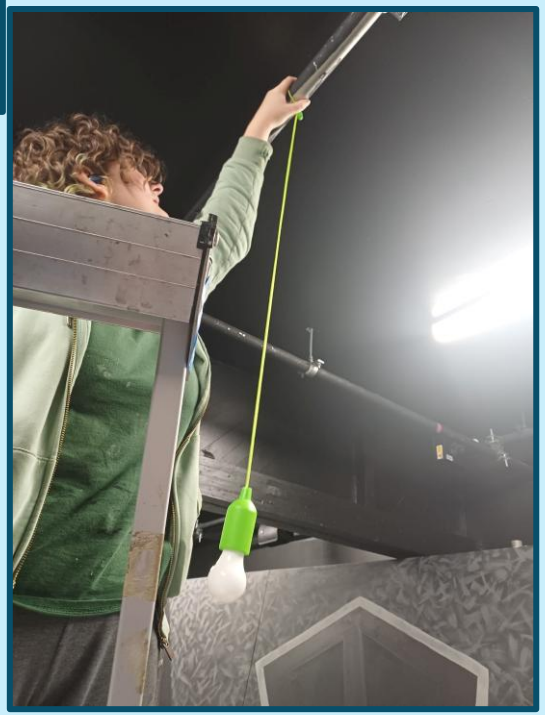


Bracing the Flats and Hanging the Light Bulb:



Although the stage right flat didn't sit quite as we had planned it, we think this might have been due to the change in the steel deck to become flush with the backdrop, we were all incredibly relieved that our design had been mostly successful and was complete.



Now that the backdrop was in position, we adjusted the steel deck slightly to be flush the with scaffolding frame, as in order to attach it to the lighting bar we had to adjust the positioning. We moved onto bracing the flats. We all held the flats up as Anne and Annie attached screw eyes to the flats, we decided instead of 3 on one and 2 on the other, we wanted 3 on both, to better support all of the weight. As we found where we had joined them in the middle needed more support or it bent inwards. We held the flats up whilst Anne and Annie attached screw eyes at both ends and in the middle. The rest of the group then held the flats in place on the steel deck, tilting outwards as much as possible, whilst me and Alice put the brace and stage weight into position. After this our work on putting the set together was mostly complete! We tied the hanging light up on the lighting bar above the stage and put the table and chairs in position, symmetrical to the centre of the window frame. We then collected our props and costumes ready to begin our camera tests, storyboard photoshoot, and final rehearsals of the presentation.

Testing Sound and Lighting, Rehearsal in Costume with Props:



I then tested my soundscape on the sound system, adjusting the volume to the level I wanted. Making sure it was quite loud as I wanted to overwhelm the audience but not so much to the point it hurt your ears.





We then got into costume and started blocking our segment of the scene that we would perform, coordinating who was working the lights, who rotated the backdrop, and how I would operate both the title cards and the sound.

We refocussed the Fresnel behind the backdrop and the profile at the front, doing something called over-rigging in order to achieve the angle Alice wanted. As the Fresnel didn't quite reach over the backdrop and she wanted it to light the floor. Whilst the Profile had a bad screw and so wouldn't fully tighten past a certain point.





Camera Tests and Storyboard Pictures:










After a few rehearsals and some blocking, we did some camera tests. Filming some of our run throughs, as well as taking pictures of our storyboard to put into black and white and see how the set and costumes all worked together with the lighting.

I think the images came out great, especially the image of Alice as Mr. Zero reaching for the murder weapon. I love the low angle shot and lighting creating the Chiaroscuro technique and a harsh shadow across Mr. Zero's eyes, as if we can't see his intentions.
I'm really looking forward to filming this piece.

Final Set:









I'm really proud of the final set we managed to create, we were extremely ambitious with our idea and I'm glad that we didn't compromise on any of the larger parts of the design. If we had more time, we would have liked to cover up the gap at the bottom of the rotating backdrop, to have added the newspaper clippings into the picture frames as planned, to have painted the floor like we had designed it, and to have added some 3D elements to the flats like drawer handles and doorknobs. I think I'm the proudest of our rotating backdrop as none of us knew if it would work in the end!



Final Presentation and the Other Groups Set:

We rehearsed our presentation a few more times and did a full run of it the morning of, running through our performance piece several times afterwards. I felt a lot less confident in this presentation than I did in the module before, I think I felt a lot more stage fright as we were presenting to the first years instead of just the rest of our class. But I was able to say everything I had wanted to, and I think the presentation went quite well. Next time I would definitely like to take my time when I talk, as I think my nerves made me speed up and not speak as clearly as I had wanted to.

I also loved the personification of Mr. Zero being replaced by a machine through Eva's costume design of the metallic sleeve protectors. It reminded me of the Tin Man from the Wizard of Oz who's searching for a heart.



I really loved getting to see what the other group had been working on, as we'd all been so busy we hadn't had a chance to properly see each other's designs. I especially really loved the painted shadows on the chair. I thought it was really well done and effective. I also love the piles of paper they filled their space with. It created a really chaotic and exaggerated reality. I thought the lever mechanism on the Adding Machine prop. they used an old paint roller handle which they stuck into the Styrofoam. I really liked how this was choreographed to be pulled in time to the soundscape created by Mary.



Clearing up and Creating a Shooting Schedule:

DAY	SCENE	TIME	#	SHOT	INT/ EXT	LOCATION	ACTION	PROPS/ COSTUME	CAMERA NOTES	LIGHTING NOTES
1	2	9.00	Set up props, camera, lighting for shot 1,2							
		10.00	1, 2	Wide shot of room	INT	Office in department store	Daisy and Zero working, whistle blows. Daisy and Zero prepare and get up to leave	Ledger Pen Slips Straw Hat Derby Hat	On tripod, camera can't see floor	L 1,4,5 set to 50% Cue stays until shot 7
		10.15	3	Medium CU	INT	Office in department store	Daisy turns toward Zero before leaving	Straw Hat Derby Hat	Tripod - facing right wall, Daisy in front of door	LED panel on sticks set to 30% from left side of face as a soft fill
		10.30	4	Medium shot	INT	Office in department store	Zero turning to say good night, Daisy has already left	Derby Hat	From direction of right door	
		10.40	5	Full shot	INT	Office in department store	Zero begins to leave, stopped by boss	Cigar Pocket Watch	Camera off stage,	
		10.55	6	Medium two shot	INT	Office in department store	From boss 'letter of recommendation' Over the shoulder shot of Zero and boss talking, at 'Sure I've heard pf them...' Zero motions the process of using an Adding Machine			LED panel from the left side – rim light effect on Zero's shoulder
		11.10	7	Close up of Zero	INT	Office in department store	Zeros reaction to the boss telling him he's fired, backdrop begins to spin, Zero steps back into spotlight	Derby Hat		2nd cue – L1,4,5 fade out Cross faded by L2 profile on tight beam setting
		11.25	8	Medium low angle	INT	Office in department store	Zero hunched over the table, grabbing at the slips of paper, and other clutter on table	Derby Hat		
		11.35	9	CU of Zero's hand	INT	Office in department store	Zero grabs the receipt piercer from the table	Receipt piercer	Overhead of Zero of his hand	
		11.50	10	Extreme CU	INT	Office in department store	Showing just Boss's face as he is stabbed – life drains from eyes			
		12.00	Reset room, pack away LEDs, tripod, camera. Turn off lighting board, dimmer							
		13.00	**LUNCH**							

After the presentations were over, we flameproofed all of our set and left that to dry. We then collected all of our costumes to store in the Design Room until filming and brought our paint and refined scale model back with us. Putting the rest of our paint in the paint store as we didn't need it anymore. I then took apart the sound system, putting away the amplifier and the sound desk, and returning the cables to where I got them from. Along with taking the TV back to the Llywfan with Alice. I then wrapped the sound cables attached to the speakers around a lighting bar so that they weren't hanging down, and as we would be de-rigging after filming.



Alice then created the shooting schedule for us, scheduled for Wednesday the 3rd of December, and extended our kit rental for another week as we had previously been planning to film before our presentation. This shooting schedule was based off of the storyboard we made. I removed the sound equipment as we wouldn't be needing it for filming, and due to copyright laws, we wouldn't be able to include our sound in the film in case it was shared online without our knowledge.

Evaluation:

My favourite part about this project has been the opportunity to explore scenic art as a career path. I've never created scenic art designs before and have never worked on a refined, painted scale model. I feel quite comfortable with painting, but it was quite surreal to see your designs on an actual flat rather than just a piece of paper or a small model. I have really enjoyed getting the chance to see the design process through to creation. Especially having this module straight after the Design Process module, it was extremely eye opening to experience the journey from design to creation in the same amount of time. I've also really enjoyed spending more time in the workshop and gaining more independence and confidence in construction. I've found that construction is a lot more enjoyable when you feel more comfortable working without constantly asking for help. It was also quite satisfying to build the flats in a shorter amount of time than I thought it would take, it made me feel a lot more capable when it comes to building things. I found the lack of job roles actually quite challenging. Although I know we all gravitated towards certain roles to take more of a lead in, we were very much a completely collaborative group where not one person made decisions. It was exciting and different as you got the chance to experiment with all areas of the design, but it became quite tricky when it relied on a unanimous agreement in all areas. It was great to experience, but I think next time I would revert back to the classic job roles. At least for me personally, I find it easier when I know what my responsibilities are and I find it easier to explore and experiment in more depth. Following this module, I would really like to improve on my construction skills and abilities. Before building the table and flats, construction felt quite out of reach in my skillset, but now that I feel more comfortable with it, I would love to keep trying new things in this area, in order to build up my knowledge of certain methods and patterns. I think improving my construction skills would also heavily improve my design skills, as I would be better at visualising the end goal and whether what I have designed is physically possible but also visually interesting. I would also like to continue building on my Q-Lab skills. I've always enjoyed making soundscapes and I think it would be good if I experimented with more interesting techniques, such as panning sound and more layered sound. A skill I want to carry forward with me is my new knowledge on canvas flat creation and the process of making a backdrop. I would also like to carry forward the creativeness of problem solving with a rotating backdrop, it was great to consider things like a bike mechanism and curtain rails, suggesting impossible ideas was exciting. I think the painting style of our design could be improved upon, as although the cross-hatching created a great texture and I think the use of varying shades of grey was effective, I think the base layer itself should have been less block colour and more expressive in its brushstrokes. I think if we had started out with a more expressive base then our design would have connected more to German Expressionism. But I'm really proud of how our set is a complete combination of our whole group's ideas and time and effort. I'm proud of how well we worked together to get this done whilst still making sure we enjoyed it.

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