Process workbook

Props and production roles

Proof of AI statement

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

Risk assessment

Risk assessments must be done for every show to determine hazards and possible threats to safety. These assessments cover the object of risk, the possible hazards and the solutions to avoid injury. They should be short and concise to ensure people actually read them. Below is my own practice risk assessment with the object in question being a prop pistol used in stage combat.

hazard	Potential harm	Risk assessment	Manage, accept, avoid	How to manage	Person in charge
The weapon misfires	If the ammunition comes in contact with another person this could cause serious harm	Seriousness - 15 Likelihood - 4 Risk - 11	manage	Security checks on ammunition and weapon and restrictions in place	Stage manager and head of props
The actor injures themselves on the mechanisms	The actor may cause injury to themselves when using the weapon	Seriousness - 6 Likelihood - 10 Risk - 3	accept	Correct training and handling of the weapon taught by an expert	Comt trainer and weapons handling expert
The weapon may be misplaced or misused by untrained persons	The weapon may be handled incorrectly by an untrained individual who could cause harm to themselves and others	Seriousness - 13 Likelihood - 8 Risk - 13	avoid	Ensure when weapon is not in use that it kept in a safe place and only trained individuals are capable of handling it	Head of props, ASM, SM

Prop weaponry

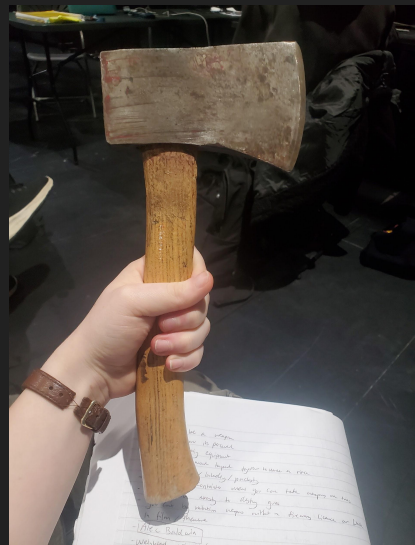
An introduction to handling and restrictions.

We were given an introduction into the correct handling of prop weaponry, in which there are countless rules and restrictions that have to be followed as a matter of lawful compliance in the world of theatre. In simple terms, anything can be a weapon - when transporting a weapon, it has to be packaged and labeled clearly in secure specialist yellow locked containers. Additionally, you can't buy imitation weapons without a firearms licence or work in film or theatre.

There is a wide variety of weapon types used in film and theatre; metal weapons (such as the weapons on the right), fake metal weapons (made from plastic, wood, ect and decorated to look metal), waited rehearsal weapons, and firearms.

In prop weaponry all blades must be blunted, soft or retractable, In firearms, blank firing guns must have a red tip and if you don't have a licence, the gun is marked in a bright orange. If a prop guns cartridges misfire it is no longer safe to keep - instead there is the option to use a sound effect or a different weapon.









Types of prop swords

The photos on the right are of a prop rapier - commonly used in fencing. The ornate cup-guard above the handle suggests that it has originated in the 17th or 18th century - linking to historical accuracy; another key skill in prop sourcing. This is a replica so the blade is blunt but it is still metal, and without sufficient training it could easily injure an actor.

To contrast, the swords on the right are waited rehearsal longswords.

They’re black and white with a blunted blade and are typically used just for rehearsals to practice stage combat. They’re still hard but they're not hard enough to injure another person and their colour makes them easy to spot when practicing. For the production, these blades will be switched out for more realistic blades.





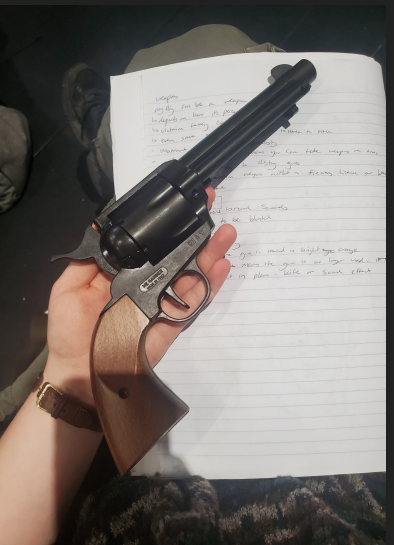
Prop weapon limits

‘A weapon includes any object which is designed for the purpose of inflicting bodily harm such as firearms, crossbows, catapults, any sharp-edged instruments used in a fight sequence (swords and knives) or martial arts weapons (such as rice flails) and batons, battering rams, swords, spears and longbows.’

A weapon, in simple terms is anything that can be perceived as a weapon. It doesn’t necessarily have to be sharp but as long as it has the potential to be a weapon it will be classed as one. We even looked at the threat of victorian farming equipment and even wood taped together to form the shape of a rife.

firearms

There are very strict rules when it comes to the use of firearms on stage and in film; the first being that you cannot aim the weapon at another person - you must aim to the side of them; in a spot where if the gun were to misfire it would not harm anyone. In the 'Code of Practice 06 Weapons in Stage Productions, 2019' the specific laws of prop weaponry in productions is outlined clearly. Here are a few of the precautions when working with prop weapons;







a) Clear safety zones - suitable marking and rigorous policing of exclusion zones to ensure unauthorised persons cannot enter the danger areas. These areas should consider intended lines of fire or throw and potentially hazardous areas created by resultant debris (cartridge cases, wadding etc)
b) All weapons and ammunition must be accounted for at all times and kept secure. The security of firearms is the responsibility of the License holder or, where appointed, the competent person. They are to make sure:
• firearms, except when in actual use, are secured appropriately;
• ammunition and firearms travel in separate, locked containers. This includes blank ammunition and replicas;
• firearms and ammunition are safe and secure at all times, including during rehearsal and performances (particularly in consideration of touring shows)
c) The Producer should assess which employees are likely to be exposed to noise levels above the lower exposure action value as defined in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 and take such measures as are necessary to meet the requirements of those Regulations. These will include suitable ear-plugs for actors and other performers and in-ear moulded products for crew, SM's and cast on tours.

(Code of Practice 06 Weapons in Stage Productions, n.d.)

Alec Baldwin and the on-stage manslaughter

‘A gun held by Hollywood actor Alec Baldwin fired a live round while he was rehearsing a scene and killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and wounded director Joel Souza on a film set in New Mexico. They were working on the film Rust.’ (Alec Baldwin: What are prop guns and why are they dangerous?, 2021) Alec Baldwin's trial of manslaughter and negligence on set is why extreme regulations put on prop weaponry; especially when it comes to firearms. When working on the set, Baldwin fired a prop gun, sourced by the film's armourer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed who was responsible for the weapons on the set and fatally struck the films cinematographer - this incident was due to the gun firing a live bullet when it should have only been firing blanks.

‘Blanks are used in the film industry to imitate live ammunition. The reason they are so convincing is that blanks are essentially modified real bullets. While the term "bullet" is commonly used to describe what is loaded into weapons, more properly it is a cartridge that is loaded: a self-contained ammunition package made up of a casing holding an explosive powder that when fired, blasts out a projectile, or bullet.’

Many prop weapons are decommissioned live artillery for increased realism;meaning they have been adapted for blank firing only. This means that they should not be able to fire live bullets, however, that's not always a successful control measure - as evident in this case.

This wasn't the only case of this happening; ‘Brandon Lee died aged just 28 in 1993 while filming The Crow, when a prop gun which mistakenly had a dummy round loaded in it was fired at him. Dummy rounds contain no explosive charge and in this case were used to film a close-up. When blanks were loaded part of the dummy round remained in the gun. After Lee was shot, the cameras kept rolling. It was only when he did not get up at the end of the scene that those on set realised something was wrong.’ a similar incident had happened before in 1984; ‘ US actor Jon-Erik Hexum started joking around on the set of a television show after being frustrated by delays in filming. He loaded a revolver with a blank, spun the chamber, put the gun to his temple and fired. Unlike Lee, he was not killed by a projectile, but rather the force of the blast was strong enough to fracture his skull. He died days later in hospital.’

(Alec Baldwin: What are prop guns and why are they dangerous?, 2021)







Organising props tables

Props tables are a key organisational aspect of a production and its very important that they remain organized so that a show will run smoothly. Props that are used in a production will have tables that are divided by electrical tape; each space will be labeled (ideally with arrows to make the directions clear) and should have their own home just for ease of management. Before every show, the props tables should be checked and a shout check should be called to ensure all props that are used have been put in the correct place.
Props themselves are also carefully considered in terms of time frame, storyline and culture of the production they are used for. For example you wouldn't have a 2010s mobile phone in a production set in the 80s. One badly chosen prop can take the audience out of the entire production so choosing the right objects is key. This means in the prop departments job is hugely based around research and consideration to make sure the prop chosen is right for the production.

Re-enactment weapons

As a member of historia Normannis I am very familiar with the use of reenactment weaponry. In this sport, there are two different forms of weapons; ‘wasters’ and ‘steels’. Wasters are practice weapons and are made of wood, they have the basic shape of the weapon they are impersonating but there are no sharp edges or hard materials. Steels refer to imitation medieval weaponry that are constructed to replicate weapons used in the 12th century. They are made o wood steel and in some cases, leather. However, the blades are blunt and should not have the capability to break skin in combat. In this way there are many rules in the weapons you can bring to combat; for example ay weapon wit split wood handles are banned for fear of harm.



The combat we are involved in is very similar to stage combat, except it is not scripted. It is all improvised but follows a loose structure in which there are rounds of combat, each gradually taking out more soldiers; they are taken out in a very strict targeted pattern that avoids tender areas of the human body such as the hands, shins, groin and head. When fighting, combatants are trained to use the flat side of the blade to make a hard, sharp wack, which, like a videogame, counts as losing one life. These weapons are usually spears, lance axes, maces, knives and swords.

The Original Re-enactors Market

Torm is a large festival that takes place twice a year in coventry, vendors will sell recreated props following the methods that were mastered from different centuries and cultures of the common era; 0CE all the way to the 21st century. I took a special interest to the medieval weaponry- swords, longbows, wasters, spears, ect that have been crafted specifically for reenactment purposes. Additionally there were weapons made for display purposes as opposed to reenactment purposes; shap metal swords, bows and guns, made using the same methodology as the period they were used.

I found this was a very interesting and fantastic experience in which my knowledge and appreciation for medieval style props - while the majority of the props available were some sort of medieval weapon (spears, swords, axes, ect) they also sold a wide range of other paraphernalia that would have been available in past times. In this way, the props sold were historically accurate, taking into account material, method, style and size. Some of the other props sold were copper rings, old necklaces and specifically victorian style fob watches caught my eye for their intricate design and beauty.

When it comes to selling weapons in a reenactors market there are very strict rules in handling, advertising and the sharpness of the weapons. For example, the swords in the bottom right photo appear sharp but they are specifically design for use in battle reenactments and therefore the metal is completely blunt.





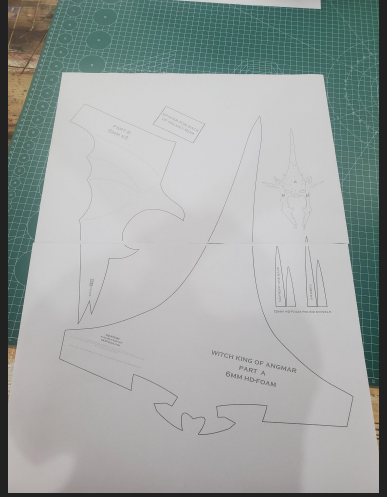


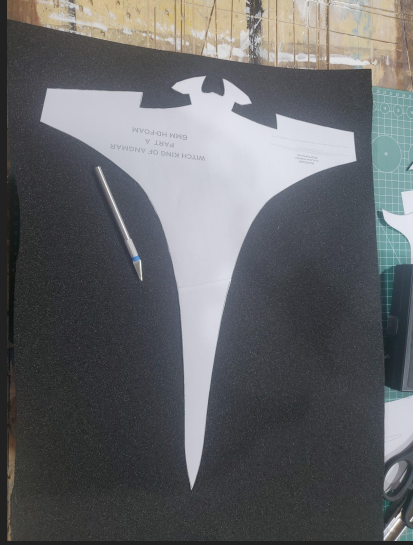




Making the witch kings mask

As a class, we got to experiment with using eva foam and a range of techniques to construct a replica of the witch kings mask from lord of the rings. We watched a video by SKS props which provided templates and instructions in order to construct the mask.

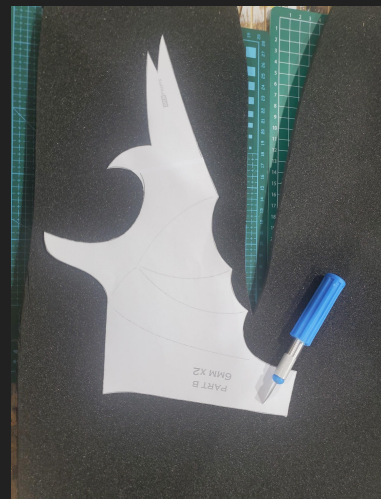


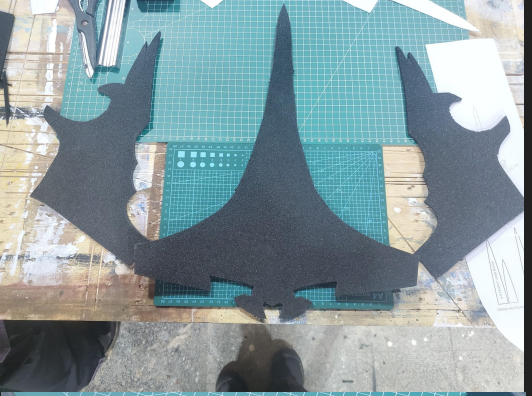


The template was printed onto card and using a craft scalpel we were able to cut them out and create a pattern to follow; tracing the shape onto the black foam. The central piece was constructed with a large horn protruding from the front while the side pieces fold inwards to sandwich it and a third piece is used as a head strap to attach the two side pieces.

Making film replicas is a common practice, as it allows enjoyers of film to obtain paraphernalia from their favorite medias, allowing them to feel move involved with that films world and story.









Attaching the foam together

Once all of the elements had been cut into the eva foam we took both of the side pieces and slit grooves into the foam; using craft knives to slice at an angle and take a large section from the foam which we then applied adhesive to. The adhesive we used requires drying before we attach any elements and works by applying a thin layer of the substance on both part to stick together, once they are both mostly dry to the touch they can be stuck together. The adhesive is hard-wearing and a very practical glue for use in props.



After forming the details on the two side pieces, pur next job was to attach the two side pieces to the front piece and back strip. The side pieces overlapped the front piece and sat underneath the eye holes which made attaching the sides together a lot easier





Forming the spikes

For the spikes attached around the mask, we used lengths of foam tubes and cut longer and shorter lengths that would attach together to create the branch-like effects as seen on the atual mask. I used a craft knife to cut into the foam and create a more characteristic natural form before reinforcing the shape with the sheet sander to shave down each if the sides and form a sharp point.



A sheet sander is a type of sander where the flat sanding surface is continuously rotating ‘This linear movement is ideal for fine finishing work where minimal material removal is desired.’ (Kreg Tool, 2025)

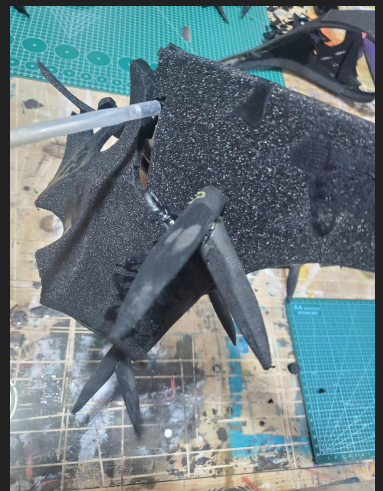
This was one of my favorite parts of the process because of how satisfying it was to run the foam along the sanders surface as it carved away at the shame. However, I found control rather difficult party for fear of losing skin if I got too close to the surface and partly because the foam was so weak that it ate away very quickly and I was worried I would take off more than I intended. Overall I was hay with the shapes I was able to create with this method.





Attaching the spikes to the mask

Using the adhesive, I was able to attach the shorter spikes to the longer one by slicing out a curved chunk from the base so that they would fit together. However, this method wasn't as successful as I had hoped because there was still pretty large holes around the edge where they connected. Luckily, to add texture and substance we added foam clay (in the video we watched, we were instructed to burn holes to make corrosion marks but we decided this would be easier and would prevent more injuries) and with this extra foam clay I was able to hide the holes around where I attached the spikes. Using my fingers I moulded the clay around the mask to add texture to the material so that when it was decorated and aged it would look more corroded and older. I focused around the points of adhesive to make the mask appear welded together indeed of glued foam.








Adding primer and paint

The next step was to add colour to make the mask look metallic in order to match the mask used in the films. We first added a layer of white glaze primer which was mostly pva and helped to seal the foam and create a glossy base coat for the metallic paint to sit on top of. At this point we were able to see the shape start to really start to come together and look somewhat metallic.



Once the glaze had dried we used a mix of silver and copper roscos metallic paint with a small amount of black to bring the colour down and started applying it to the mask, making sure to get into all of the nooks and crannies. I then went in with an even darker mix to contrast; applying it heavily to the heavily worn areas such as the crease of the spike and the tips of the spikes.

Adding rust

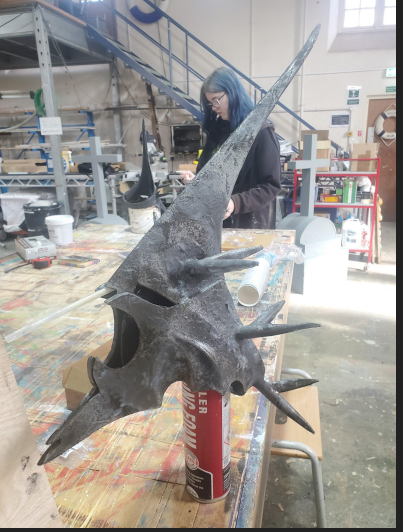
One of the key factors to add was the rusting; this would really bring the mask to life for it to tell a story. For this, we added iron powder - dipping our paintbrush into pva and then into the powder and dabbing it against the mask in the areas we wish to rust. We then sprayed the masks with lemon juice which should have reacted with the iron power and created rust.







Unfortunately, this did not work and no rust formed on anyone's mask. Dave later concluded this was because the method of applying the pva and iron powder together created a protective coating of glue around the powder and prevented the lemon from getting into it and rusting the metal.





Adding rust p2

Since the first application of rust was a bust we tried again but this time we switched up our methods; we used a brush to apply pva then we picked up sprinkles of the iron powder and just sprinkled them on top to prevent any pva sealing over the top. We them used vinegar in a spray bottle to soak the powder. After a few days the results (as seen in he photo on the right) were very successful and created the exact controlled rust we wanted to create. Creating this mask was probably my favorite part of this module as I found it really fun to create my own replica of a prop used in film and add my own touches and design elements to it.









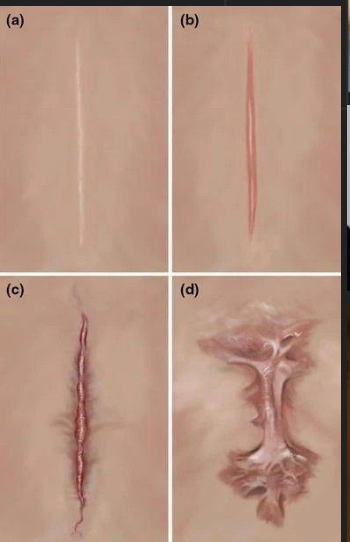
Slime mold fungus wound

For this lesson, we were instructed to find inspiration pictures of a type of wound we would like to replicate. I looked at a variety of different types of wound such as gashes, bites and bullet wounds but the one that stood out to me mose was the scarring of burn wounds; I love their unique forms and patterns that run along the skin like scales.

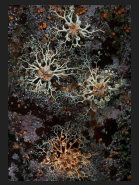






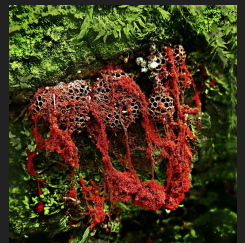


After studying burn scars for a while in my eyes they started to resemble slime mold fungi; unique forms of nature that are more closely related to seaweed than they are to fungi. Therefore I decided to replicate their overall form and structure but ina more human-skin format.













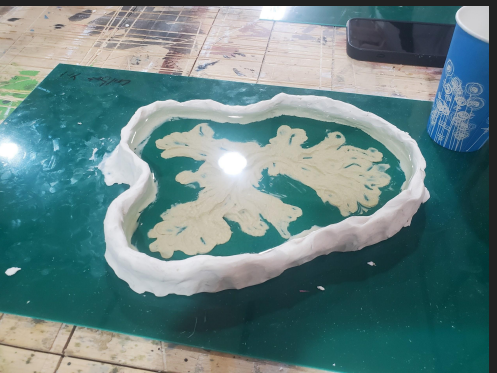


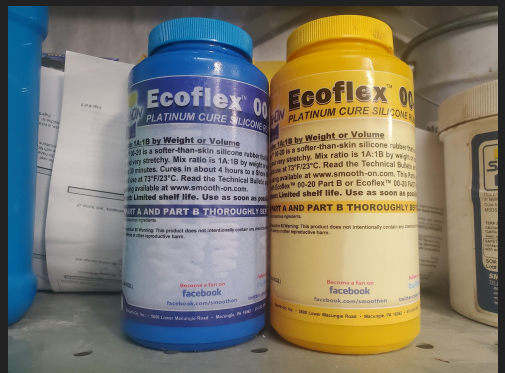
Creating the mold

I formed what I wanted to replicate into a fake wound using sculptex (a clay-like material that is very malleable and doesn't dry out) which I then surrounded in a wall of plasticine. To create the hard cast we mixed a 1:1 ratio of part A and part B smooth on ecoflex; '**Ecoflex™** rubbers are platinum-catalyzed silicones that are versatile and easy to use.' (Smooth-On, Inc., n.d.)

Ecoflex reacts extremely quickly after mixing part A and B and therefore once its poured it must cover the whole wound sculpt before it hardens and becomes solid.











Cleaning the mold

We managed to separate the hard mold from the sculptex then clean the mold using an old brush and asinine to work out the sculptex still stuck in the mold. Due to the shape of my wound, I had to work out the sculptex for a very long time and if I were to do this again I would make sure my wound was less complicated for ease of removal of the hard cast.







Creating the wound cast

Using liquid latex we were able to mix a test cast agent which could be used to remove any leftover sculptex from within the crevices of the hard mold. The latex takes a long time to dry so we left it for a few days to dry before we got it out of the cast. Once it had dried it was still tacky to the touch and so we used talkan powder to gently ease the cast from the mold and using a paintbrush we teased it form the crevices, getting the power into all the nooks and crannies. Because of the miss-colour this was just a tester but I was extremely happy with how well this one turned out and I really enjoyed the process.







Creating a second cast

With the second cast we wanted to create a more accurate colour match to our skin so we mixes the liquid latex ourselves, however, unfortunately this mix became very saturated no matter how much we tried to dull the colour down using a blue dye. Once pouring the latex into the cast we used the same method to remove the mold with talkan powder. This part of the process did not go as smoothly as the first cast because, only after it had dried, I realized I had not put enough latex into the cast so the wound came out ripped and covered in holes where it had been too weak to hold any structural integrity.

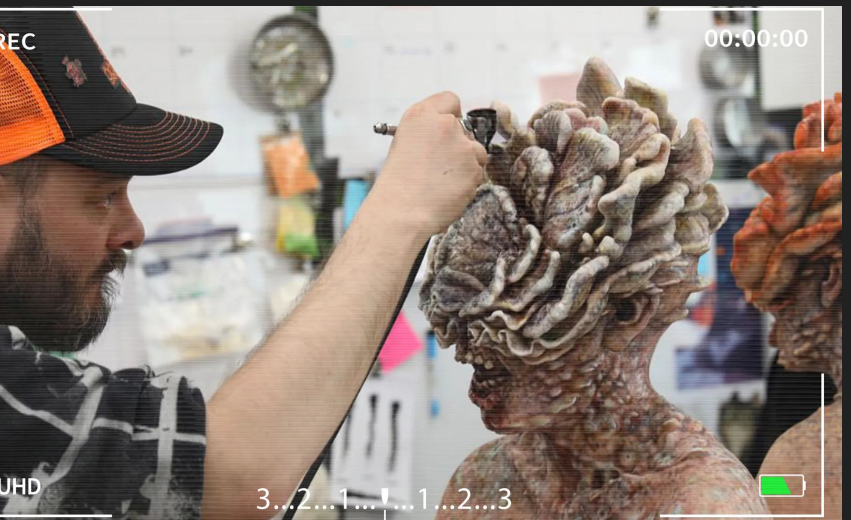












The last of us wounds

My fake wound study was heavily inspired by The Last of Us; a video game in which people become infected by a zombie-like virus constructed entirely of corrupting fungi which was then adapted into a popular tv show. For this tv show, the SFX artists had a lot of work cut out for them with the amount of fungus-inspired wounds they had to design and apply to the actors.

The designer of these infection wounds, Barrie Gower 'is responsible for some of the most intricately designed, terrifying characters on series such as *Stranger Things*, where he took the cherub-looking actor Jamie Campbell Bower and transformed him head-to-toe into the murderous Vecna, the villain aligned with the Upside Down.' and so naturally has a very impressive prosthetic makeup CV, but when working on the last of us he wasn't alone; while 'Gower and his team would create and assemble the makeups at his studio in the UK; there was also a smaller prosthetics team based in Canada. Additionally, there were about 60 artists in total that applied the makeups on the actors by the end of the show.' after more research I discovered the UK studio working on these prosthetics was BGFT Ltd; a company he founded in London.

'To create the makeups for the Clickers, Infected who must "click" to find their way around , a few modalities were used depending on the needs of the actor portraying them. For Samuel Hoeksema and Olivier Ross-Parents, the two hero actors who portrayed the Clickers, makeups were sculpted specifically for their faces. They portrayed the first Clickers we see in the series in episode two and then again in episode five. Each actor portrayed two different-looking Clickers, so both ended up with two customized makeups.'

On the left are examples of the SFX designed for the show and I find them absolutely incredibly and as a massive fungi fan myself, I am in love with the scientific accuracy of the designs of the fungi; the colours and the physical fungi features. The explosive expressions of the wounds are incredibly detailed and sculpted with beautiful organic structure which is what inspired me to make my own fungus wound, albeit a lot simpler to the ones used in The Last of Us.

(Nast, 2023)

Fake blood and blood bags





Fake blood is commonly used in film and theatre and is a very fun liquid to experiment with. There are many makeshift methods for fake blood like using honey, food coloring and water which I have previously used in a short film, however, this stuff was very sticky and got everywhere. Professional fake blood is the same consistency of real blood with a thick viscosity that pools and bleeds like blood. You can aquire fake blood in many different colours and properties like edibility.









To make blood bags (used for sudden deadly wounds like bullet wounds) you need clingfilm, blood and a heat sealer. First create a bag in the clingfilm by layering up the plastic together and heat sealing the edges before using a syringe to insert a small amount of blood that is then sealed using the heat sealer to create a little blood bubble.



Creating a face cast

We made face casts of myself, Trick and Oscar which is common practice in the industry for mask-making and other such jobs. I got to see both perspectives of the process which was a very fun experience. We started by getting the model to wear a plastic bag and swim cap to stop the alginate from sticking to their hair and clothes - however, for facial hair that we can't cover we used a thin layer of vaseline to prevent an accidental waxing. We mixed up a concoction of water and powdered alginate which is essentially a type of seaweed until it resembled a thin, smooth, dough-like viscosity and started applying it to Tricks face, scooping it carefully around their facial features. One of the most important parts of this was to avoid the nostrils; leaving a hole so that they could breathe.

During a process like this, the model is completely blind and unable to move, therefore, consent and communication is highly important - it's crucial that you frequently check up on your model by agreeing on some sort of code (for example thumbs up or thumbs down when answering check-up questions).







Applying the plaster

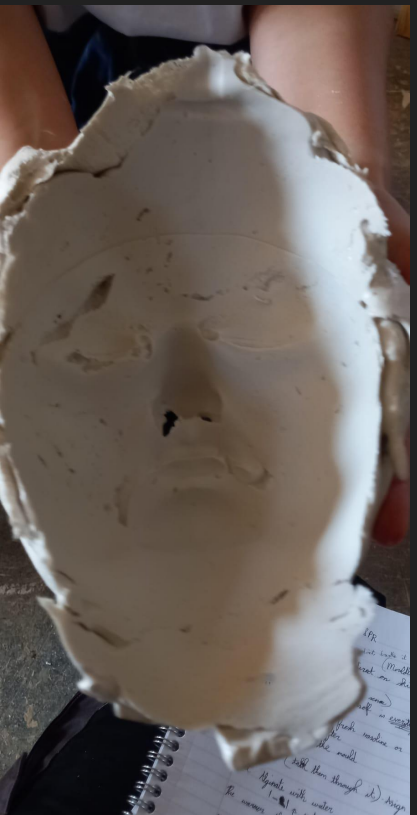
Small sheets of plaster are cut and soaked in water and once the alginate has been given a few minutes to start to solidify, the plaster is layered onto the face. In this process, it's very important to use your fingers to work into the lumps of the alginate to agitate the plaster and trigger it to react. The reaction itself is an exothermic reaction so warmer water will cause the plaster to go off faster, through either warm or cold water is usable. Every inch of the face should be covered, making sure to keep a decently sized hole in the nose for ease of breathability.





It was at this point that, as a model, the face cast begins to become very heavy and it gets difficult to keep your head up for extended periods of time due to the strain on the neck. From the inside, however, you can feel the aldinate start to solidify and separate from your face.
Once the plaster had dried, the lights were turned off to make the transition easier for the model and they will wriggle their facial muscles to ease the mask off their face.
After this, a liquid plaster is poured into the mold and a face cast is completed.

Finished casts







Constructing a mascot mask









Following on from what we did during our costume module, we had to finish off our mascot costume by constructing a seal head.

We started by finding some scrap wood and using a projector we reproduced the outline of pur reference image onto the wood, adjusting the focus so that it fit the size requirements before we drew the outline onto the wood. We did this with both the side and front profile of the seal. After this, we used jigsaws to cut this shapes out with slits down the centre so that they could slot together. We then used expanding foam to fill out the shape; coating the four segments in a light, breathable base.

However, during this stage we were continuously running out of expanding foam and eventually we had to leave the mask with a large hole in the side.





Forming the shape

After the foam had fully dried we used standard kitchen knives to cut away at the foam and carve the shape of the formed plywood base we constructed underneath. We then sanded the shape down where the holes and impurities if te expanding foam caused issues to make sure the surface was soon for when we applied clay.
To cover the large hole in the side of the head where we ran out of expanding foam we used clay to fill out the shape; making sure it was to the same form and proportions as the opposite side.







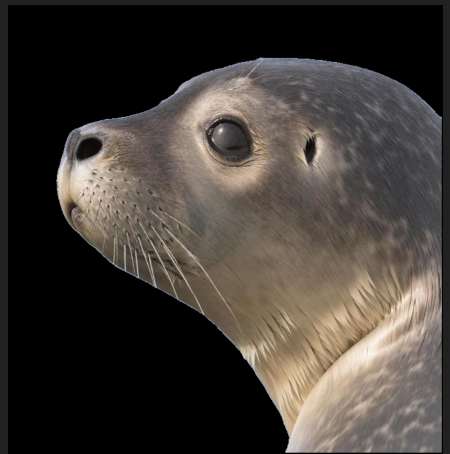


Making the face

Originally, our reference image was an AI generated seal mascot with a particularly creepy smile and bulbous eyes, but after speaking with Stacey we decided instead to follow the reference that I had drawn previously. Using this photo and images of real gray river seals we formed the shape of the masks head, the main differences between the ai seal and ours was that ours was based off the real face shapes of seals and their facial features.



We started with covering the whole mask in a thin layer of air-dry clay before marking out the basic locations of the facial features before going in with more detailing and expression. After forming the nostrils we compared the face to the reference images and decided that they were too far down, s using cheese wire we were able to slice the nose off and move it up











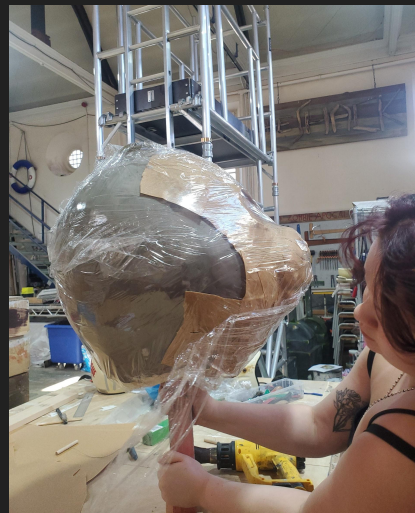
Using warbler

‘Paper thin and incredibly sticky when activated, worbla works much like a thermoplastic interfacing: you can use it to fuse to and manipulate fabrics, creating seamless looks and permanent details. Worbla is a brand of non-toxic, eco-friendly thermoplastic sheets and pellets designed for sculpting, costume making, and props. It becomes soft and adhesive when heated around 90°’





After finalising the shape and smoothing down the clay we started adding sheets of worbla. We heated the material using heat guns which caused it to become soft and malleable and then we draped it over the clay mold. To create the circular shape we cut slits in the worbla and curved it around, heating the seams to fuse them together and for the more detailed areas of the face like the eyes and nose we cut small sections of the worbla and heated them to smooth the edges together. This part of the process was tedious but satisfying as the worbla melded to our touch, however, within the seams of the mouth and nose we had struggles with smoothing the worbla inside the crevices due to the heat needed causing the material to become weak and tear.





The final

Unfortunately, due to the deadline of this process workbook I will be unable to show the finished product but the week after this is handed in I intend to coat this mask in a layer of thin grey seal-like fur with a layer of wadding sandwiched between the warbler to soften the masks firmness. After this, we will be able to decorate this mask to become more seal-like and make it an actual wearable mask for the mascot costume.

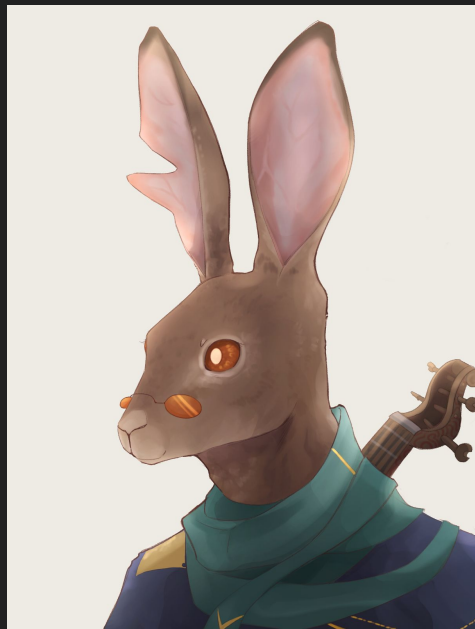




Creating a cosplay mask

This is Kipart whittlebee III (kip), my dnd character

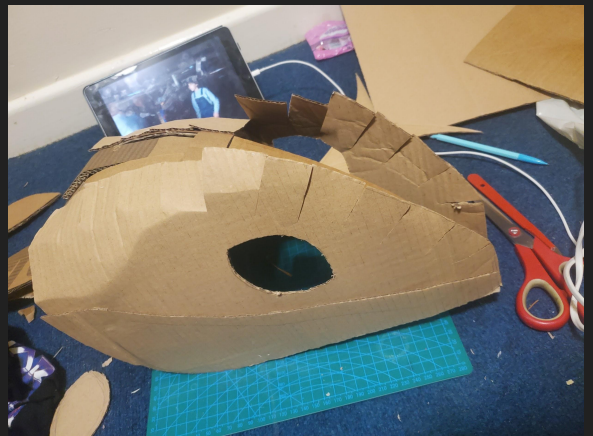
I wanted to make a cosplay of him in all his glory and so I started constructing a hare mask to replicate his face to be the standout centrepiece of his cosplay.
Kips face is pretty much just the same as any old hare, but his eyes are orange and he has a slit in one of his ears were a cult of tieflings tried to make rabbit soup with him.



Creating the structure

To start this project I created a skeletal structure from cardboard. I first built a circular hat-base perfectly tailored to fit my head before using strips of cardboard to build the basic head shape of a hare. I then created the two sides of kips head with a thin layer of cardboard cut to fit the skeleton and essentially fill in the gaps. I made sure both of the eyes would sit in the same place on both sides of the head so that he didn't look too lopsided. I had to cut slits of these sheets so that they could curve icely over kips head. I also used a tissue x pva mix to create a mushy clay that I used to form the shape of his nose so that when i added fabric i coil still deine the lines of his nostrils and the bulge of his snout.











Paper mache and eva foam

After creating a cardboard endoskeleton I applied a few layers of paper mache; using techniques I was taught as a child in arts and crafts classes - watered down PVA glue and the lidl weekly that I have been slowly collecting since the beginning of the year. I did this to build up the shape and stability of the mask. To make the ears I cut the shapes out of eva foam, I then cut a slit in one of the ear
before I cut out four segments of fabric for the front and back of both ears. If I had more time I would have sewn the ears together, however, considering the fact that I had less than a week before the convention I was making this costume for and I was only able to work in the evenings due to my internship, I resorted to using hot glue to stick the fabric together. This meant that they were a lot messier than I would have liked but they did the job.













Attaching the fabric and final touches

Using a simple pattern I cut out the central and two side segments to sit over the paper mache base I had created before hand sewing the three pieces together, forming the head shape and using a craft blade to cut out the eye holes - folding the fabric unto the holes so that they couldn't see the scrappy cardboard inside. My original plan involved using magnets to attach the ears for ease of transport, however, I found that the magnets I had were not strong enough to sit securely together through a layer of fabric. Against my preference I stuck te ears to the mask with a lot of hot glue.

I then mixed fabric softener and acrylic paint to make a makeshift fabric paint and used a small brush to apply it in hare-like patterns across the head of the mask. I also used a sponge to apply white around the eyes and dark brown around the base and tips of the ears.



The final product



This is the final look of m whole cosplay. The majority of the clothes either came from my own wardrobe or they came from charity shops so that I could be more sustainable. I tried to keep the look as similar to the drawings I had done of him earlier and I am very happy with how the mask turned out in the end. However, if I were to do it again I would try to make his eyes more detailed and use less hot glue as a cure-all.

https://www.provideocoalition.com/marvels_the_avengers_taking_the_hud_to_new_heights/

The iron-man mask





As a huge fan of the older marvel films I have a lot of interest in the construction of the iron-man mask designed and used by Robert Downey Jr. while the majority of the suit was cgi motion capture, there were scenes in which RDJ wore a full suit of armour and a few different masks for different shots; the mask on the right was used for the external shots of iron man while they filmed the inside view o the mask in 'several ways depending on exactly which shot. Some of them had a fake sorta half helmet from the prop department, then composited in the glass and HUD. I seem to remember mention of a full helmet with glass front then they lit his face inside the helmet. There were also some where they just used that he is a really good actor, shot his face and put in everything later.'

'With modern systems it is also barely feasible to do the entire thing rendered. With a skilled enough team it just passes the uncanny valley. This is still extremely expensive and not as good, so would only be used as a last resort.' The mask used to depict the iron-man mask was delicately designed to replicate the expertly constructed face of the famous powerful suit and such was construed and decorated to appear metal by using metallic spray pains and aging to give them that signature worn, battle scarred look. The mask has a simple closing mechanism where pressurised air triggers the face plate to fold down vi the pipes and tubes in the back of the head. This movement was then refined in post for that signature iron man mask 'clink'.

(Reddit.com, 2026)





Historical accuracy in prop design

I studied BBC article on media's relationship with history and another article written by the artistic director of hidden theatre who discusses the question ‘is it even possible to make a historical drama that is 100% accurate?’ the artistic director examines the importance of this question, taking into consideration period shows. - ‘the question that isn’t being asked here is: what do we mean by accuracy? Once you start considering this, some of the either/or begins to break down. If accuracy means that the costumes, set, and props are period appropriate: yes, that’s achievable, and if one of your production goals is to place a story in a time period, there’s not much excuse for getting that wrong carelessly, even it means that your audience will have to get used to something that looks a little bit different from their imagined ideal of that period.’ They go on to discuss ‘The BBC article does hit one particular point that is easy to forget: knowing the facts doesn’t mean we know the thoughts or feelings behind them. It’s an almost inevitable historical hole, and one that drama by its nature requires to be filled. So ascribing motivations and thought processes to characters, while going beyond documented fact, is unavoidable. It may open the door to charges of “inaccuracy”, but it would in most cases be equally hard to make a watertight case for an “accurate” version (as opposed to simply a different interpretation). Arguably, you can get it entirely wrong by making things up without supporting evidence or blatantly contradicting what the record indicates, but that doesn’t mean that it’s inherently wrong to try to fill in the question with educated guesses. Since intention behind action is something historians argue over all the time, I don’t think this is the flashpoint of accuracy arguments in most cases, either.’

Overall, both articles bring up a lot of interesting points on authenticity within period productions and how it is important for directors to consider different types of accuracy involved in prop sourcing and usage in media and theatre. Historical accuracy is also something that we discussed during class - discussing the importance of considering the context in which the props are used. If even one prop is out of place it can spoil the whole set and take the audience out of the story.

(ismurphy, 2016)

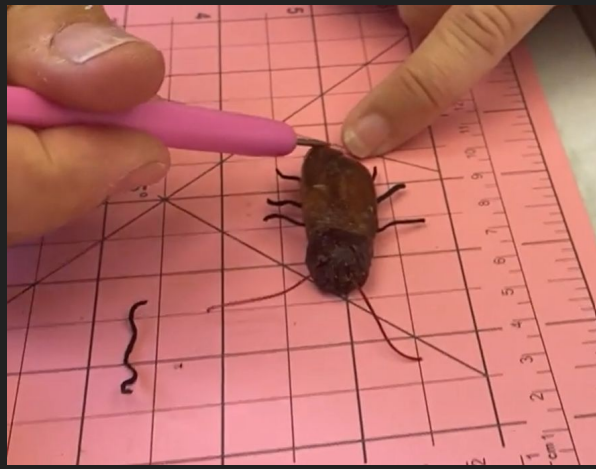
Prop food

One aspect of prop making which is often overlooked is edible prop food. Food stylists are used to solve problems like making sure ice cream doesn't melt or finding a convincing substitute for foods that could cause potential harm. When replicating things one normally wouldn't eat, food stylists have to find edible ingredients to make the same appearance as a non edible prop. Sometimes directors want an edible prop even if the actors don't plan on eating it, for example in the 2028 film “Homecoming” where two characters have to handle raw chicken guts and other objects at the same time. To avoid cross contamination on set the food stylist, Melissa McSorley created edible and safe chicken guts out of carefully disguised foods such as ramen and glass noodles, cherry tomatoes and naturally died turnips. Using prop meat also avoids meat going bad on long shoot days.

It's important to use food that can take on many different shapes and sizes, however, if you can't find an alternative food with the same features, you can also made edible foods from scratch for example - using molds and gelatin or other forming agents. The most important elements to consider are size, colour, and shape, finding foodstuffs that will fit the criteria as a safe alternative.

In the film “Crazy ex girlfriend” (2015) one of the characters eats a cockroach. To achieve this effect, Melissa McSorley mastered using a cleverly disguised date using seaweed and Chilli threads to make up the legs and antenna. The date firmed the shame and colour of the body while the chilli threats created the right size and temperament of the antenni, while the seaweed gave the signature crunch you would image wen eating a cockroach.

(Desiderio, n.d.)





Wild creations

Wild creations, based in cardiff pride themselves 'on our attention to detail, we strive to work on time, on budget and to your brief. We create the most imaginative, beautiful and practical creations. Whether it is a sculpture, model make, a piece of scenery or a theming scheme for TV, Film, Theme parks, exhibitions or brand activations, Wild Creations is the 'Weird and Wonderful Realised'.

Wild creations create incredible props for different events and celebrations held across the UK. they've worked on hundreds of different displays but the one that caught my eye the most was the Jurassic World Fallen Kingdom display held in London, 2018.

'For the launch of Universal Pictures Jurassic World – Fallen Kingdom, we created four life-size T-rex's which were installed globally in the UK, France, Germany and for the world premier of the film in the USA. We also created a replica Gyrosphere and Blue the velociraptor for a photo opportunity in London.' The team go on to explain their process for constructing these incredible sculptures and how they balanced their workload;

'To start the process, Samantha, our head sculptor created a clay maquette of the dinosaur. The maquette was 1:25 in scale and was used to get client approval on the features, stance and look of the T-Rex. Once the maquette was approved we could then 3D scan this and use it as the base for the polystyrene 'skeleton' of the dinosaur. Our 7 axis robot was programmed to mill the dino in sections. This was then pieced together over a metal framework and supported with a scaffold structure. The next step was to add the detail and a team worked on applying clay to the body of the dinosaur. Each scale on the T-rex was individually crafted and sculpted.' they showed photos of the process and I found it extremely interesting to observe the construction and designing progress of this large scale project.








Introduction to production roles

Within a crew there is a distinct hierarchy and general etiquette to be followed; the first expectation is that you respect the rest of your crew and abide by the hierarchy. First impressions count so make sure you make a good impression on your team. Be clean and tidy, listen and communicate with others, wear appropriate clothing, be early to meetings and rehearsals, never cross the stage without asking, always use the stirs - never jump off stage and be careful what you say on stage because he relay and cons systems may pick you up.

When working in a crew, you are expected to be reliable, focused, calm, reliable, organised, good at time keeping, able to multitask, able to read ground plans/drawings, basic first aid, able to read the script, know the plots for props, costume changes, fight scenes, ect and know who is in what scenes.

Producers are the first to get it up and running, they're the driving force and overall decision maker. Production managers work closely with the line producer and are usually in both the set and office, they help find crew and direct the team. The director of photography design the look and feel of a film, and focus on lighting, camera and angles - they're in charge of making every shot usable and works closely with the colourist. The art directors vary depending on the type of production, they turn the vision into reality and remain on set of the duration. The second unit is a separate batch of crew with their own second unit director, gaining supplementary footage not requiring the main cast. The visual effects team form in the early stages of production, they decide what VFX are needed.

The hierarchy

- producer + production manager
- Technical manager+company stage manager
- Director + stage manager
- Set designer + costume designer + sound designer + lighting designer

Introduction to theatre workings

There are two main types of theatre production houses; Production house and receiving house. A production house is one that writes, designs and produces its own theatre productions, however, this type of methodology is now rare to find. A receiving house is a theatre which doesn't put its own shows, but instead, they will house touring shows. A few theatres will be production houses for half the year and are receiving houses for the other half. An example of this is The Theatre Royal, Bath (my local big theatre).
Bath Theatre Royal is known as a repertory theatre which was a style of theatre popular from the 1900s, but that died in 80s 90s - theatres produced their own shows with a team of people that would rehearse, produce, brin tours in, then began receiving houses.





Theatre production methodology

Production week

There are four stages to putting a theatre stage on -

- inception idea - (director or producer idea), engage a designer, production manager and work out the budget, scale and crew
- Rehearsal period - start of the intensive part, DSM, actors, ect
- Production period - make tweaks, change last minute designs, working process
- Run - opening night until close

SM and DSM

The stage manager is the highest ranked member of the crew and provide clear communications between each crew member to ensure their ideas are produced. To contrast, the director stage manager is a sort of ASM, their primary role is to be in the rehearsal room with the actors and be the directors right-hand-man, they need to be an active, responsible person with their key role to be the main line of communication between the SM and director. They should be in charge of communicating the actors needs and wants for the set, props and costume.

Rehearsal process

Lighting rig - chief electrician
-putting up the lights in the correct planned places
-cable management
-lighting desk

Sound rig - chief electrician
-setting up the sound
-microphones
-speakers
-sound desk
-cable management

Set fit up - master carpenter
-putting the set in the space
-ensuring safety measurements in place

Lighting focus - lighting designer
-pointing lights n the set
-barn doors, gobos, gels

Lighting plot - lighting designer/programer/director/DSM
-shapes and colors
-allowing director to see lights in space
-cue list

Props desk - head of props
-organise props tables

Sound plot - sound designer/director/DSM
-mic checks
testing and tuning
-cue list (qlab)

Stitz probe - director/conductor
-full picture of soundscape

Costume parade - chief costume designer/head of wardrobe/director
-alterations
-costume checks
-fitting and presenting
-last minute changes

Technical rehearsals - stage manager/director/DSM
-first rehearsals with cues
-set changes

dress rehearsals - stage manager/director
-fine tuning
-cuts/alterations from producer/director

Notes session
-director sits down and tells you want changes they want
-notes with cast/notes with technicians
-notes with cast and crew together
-working notes - redoing the technical rehearsals

photo/press shoots - marketing team
-advertising
-all visuals finished

Preview - stage manager/director
-actual guest audience
-use reactions for any final changes

Opening night - stage manager
-start of run
-everything finished
-people on standby in case of technical difficulties

Get out/returns - stage manager
-all set/lighting/sound comes out
-all rented items returned

My role; Assistant Stage Manager (ASM)

As ASM it's my job to provide clear and relevant information from each role to the stage manager and vice versa. I can be used as free hands whenever someone needs help and flick between each member of the crew to help the SM organise and to spread their ideas. I am also in charge of sourcing furniture and for props organization on stage; the props table and doing the shout check before each show to make sure everything is in the place it is supposed to be.
My objective is to keep a clear line of communication between all crew members and the SM and DSM and provide assistance to anyone who needs it.
M personal goal is to understand the deeper inner workings of being a crew and the roles assigned to each person, so I can find out exactly where I can fit in the system, Focusing on rehearsals, setting set, running list/track to understand the process clear and organised information.
I want to avoid miscommunication causing problems for everyone.
The paperwork I am in charge of is a props set list and a copy of the DSM book/script

'An Assistant Stage Manager (ASM) plays a pivotal role under the guidance of the Stage Manager, providing support during both rehearsals and performances.'
Depending on the size of the performance will affect the roles of the ASM, ranging between costume, props, paperwork, lighting and sound.
'Typically, ASMs are responsible for meticulously documenting various aspects of rehearsals, such as tracking cast entrances and exits and noting props mentioned in the script. Collaborating closely with the Stage Manager, they assist in sourcing or creating props and set dressing according to the Designer's specifications.'

My role during the show

For our show, It was my job as ASM to source furniture that would fit the tavern and the captains quarters. I created a moodboard of furniture that would fit in the style. I searched through parry 1 to see what I could find that matched to the moodboard I had made. I later discovered that the 2md years who were providing the set also lined up some furniture acquired from antiques shops, we were able to use some of this which made my search a lot easier.
Additionally, during the first steps of the show I assisted sound by creating and recording the sound of a coin dropping to be used in the show, I assisted props by helping them source set dressing and providing brown and green glass bottles filled and bunged with liquid disguised to look like alcohol. And I helped the lighting team by working as their light model for where to angle the lighting to best capture the actors; specifically I helped between tech and dress rehearsals to pace the transition scene and ensure the sound and lighting would cue at the right time.

efore each show, my role is to organise the prop tables, walk around stage doing a shout check to make sure everything is in the correct position before each run through, assist the SM with any notes and, most importantly, it is my job to make the transition between the modern-time and old-timey tavern; removing the 3 cola cans, one stella can, cider bottles and coasters and bring in tankards and change the calendar to 1716 in the 15 seconds of transition we have due to the sound constraints on sound.




Furniture moodboard







Sourcing furniture








Finished look



















Set analysis

The set itself was built for us by the second year DPs and features a tavern on the left and a captain's cabin on the right. The captains cabin is aloft on roatra and requires treds for actors to get up and down, the majority of the rest of the furniture was sourced by the 2nd years from the Parry store room or from antiques stores. The furniture in question for the tavern was a bar. Stools, a small table and a barrel in the corner; we filled out the set with a large wooden table, chairs and set decorations on the bar, table and shelves. For the pirate ship the second years sourced the desk, chair, draws, tables, boxes and small chest - we added a large chest of treasure, a barrel, map, spyglass and dice to be used during the show.

The set built by the second years is absolutely amazing and we were so fortunate to be able to use it for our show (after being correctly advised. The detailing and aging applied to the set really brings it go life and gives it such history and dimension - where you can see they have wood grained has come out beautifully especially under the light that we have set. My favorite set element is the window in the captain's cabin set; the large flat st the back has been cut like large wooden-framed windows with details like curtains and trim but i love the light framed behind set to shone through the windows and cast window-shaped shadows over the set.





Running show

Our crew consisted of Eirys - stage manager, Sophie - director stage manager, myself and Oscar - assistant stage managers, Ash - lighting designer, Ellis - sound designer, Kate and Annabel - costume designers and Trick and Felix - props designers



Between rehearsals I helped the lighting and sound desks to perfect their cue notes and during rehearsals and the show I was extra hands backstage; helping the actors with their props from the prop table and in case anyone needed an extra pair of hands.
My main job, however, was to wait in preparation for the two transition scenes (as soon on the photo on the bottom left).



Shout check

As the ASM's it was mine and Oscars job to keep track of what props are used in each scene and their exact locations to ensure there are no lost or misplaced props when they're needed in the performance. Here is the list made, categorising every prop and its location for each scene. We performed a shout check before every performance to ensure everything was in the correct starting place.

SCENE: 1

Start of scene:
* Two drinks on table
* One drink behind bar to be passed
* The Coin behind bar
* Coasters on table
* Service bell on bar
* Calendar on bar
* Fiver carried by TT
* Change behind bar
* Book brought on with witch

End of scene:
* Calendar date flipped over
* ASMs take off modern glasses and coasters change to tankards during transition
* Uncover wanted posters during transition
* Bring on lanterns and candles
* Book stays on set
* Bell stays
* Fiver behind bar
* Coin held by TT

Notes:
* Drink behind bar is can of Stella
* Callander needs to be very visible, change from 2016 to 1716
* Fifteen seconds to swap over things in transition

SCENE: 2

Start of scene:
* TT has Coin in pocket
* Tankards on table and bar
* Book left on bar
* Callander changed over
* Wanted posters visible
* Lanterns and candles on table

End of scene:
* TT has Coin in pocket
* Everything is left where it is

Notes:
* actors move over to ship set

SCENE: 3

Start of scene:
* TT has Coin in pocket
* Dice on desk
* Map on desk
* Spy glass on desk
* Lamp on desk
* Quill and ink pot on desk

End of scene:
* Cook takes Coin
* Dice stay on desk
* QM takes Map from desk

Notes:
* Now on ship set
* Clover's dice can be used

SCENE: 4

Start of scene:
* Cook has coin
* QM has Map and quill

End of scene:
* Cook still has coin
* QM takes map and quill off with them

Notes:
* Nothing changes on ship desk
* Carrying on directly from scene 3

SCENE: 5

Start of scene:
* QM has map and quill
* Crew 2 wrapped in rope

End of scene:
* Map and quill put on desk
* QM has Rope

Notes:
* Carrying on directly from scene 4

SCENE: 6

Start of scene:
* Tankards, lanterns and candles on bar and table
* Bell and Callander on bar
* Book left on bar
* QM brings on rope with them
* Cook has Coin

End of scene:
* Set dressing stays where it is

Notes:
* Move over to tavern set
* Carries on directly into scene 7

SCENE: 7

Start of scene:
* Tavern set dressing stays the same

End of scene:
* QM takes rope off with them
* Cook takes coin off with them

Notes:
* Carry on from scene 6
* Move over to ship set

SCENE: 8

Start of scene:
* Map, quill and ink pot on desk
* Dice on desk
* Spy glass on desk
* Lamp on desk
* Witch tied in rope
* Cook has coin

End of scene:
* Ship set dressing the same
* Rope on floor
* TT has coin

Notes:
* TT and witch go over to tavern set

SCENE: 9

Start of scene:
* Tankards, lanterns and candles on table
* Bell and Callander on bar
* TT has coin

End of scene:
* Coin left on floor in front of TT
* Transition sequence

Notes:
* Leyland will pick up Coin in transition sequence and put down a 20p instead

SCENE: 10

Start of scene:
* Tankards, lanterns and candles swapped over for modern glasses, cans and coasters
* Callander flipped from 1716 to 2016
* Wanted posters covered
* Bell and book remain on bar
* 20p on floor in front of TT

End of scene:
* 20p is picked up

Notes:
* The end of the play





Transition scene

These photos depict the transition scene where the modern pub gets transformed into an 18th century tavern. During this transition Oscar and I slink onto the set and swap out the modern bottles for old timey tankards, remove the coasters and change the calendar on the bar from 2016 to 1716. During this scene, the time traveler (Clover) transforms from a modern time to the pirate times; this happens by the other actors encircling them, removing their coat, pulling their socks up and adding a bandana to their head, all while dramatic music is playing, transforming from modern pop to a pirate-like shanty, and while purple and blue lights swirled overhead.

We had until the actors left the set after the transition and quick change to make this transition; approximately 15 seconds



(Me changing the scene)

During dress and technical rehearsals we practiced the transition over and over again to ensure that for the final show we would have the sequence perfected. During these rehearsals I had many arguments with the prop coke cans that would often fall or make noise as I moved them, making our part less seamless. Thankfully we were able to perfect the transition for the actual show.

Final impressions

I really enjoyed this module and found it extremely interesting to have the opportunity to experiment with such a wide range of materials and tools for prop making, while also being able to understand the inner workings of a working theatre crew.
I particularly enjoyed practicing the range of materials and playing around with them in ways I would have never before considered during my time in prop making. Additionally, I especially loved the wound making, despite unfortunately never being able to finish this project and use makeup to create an SFX wound for use in production, but I found the designing and the process of creating the mold extremely satisfying. I also really enjoyed creating the witchkings mask and the decorating of this project by using rust, I think that because of my interest for fine details that prop design and production may be where I would want to specialise in the future because it allows me to make very interesting projects with intricate detailing. I think if I were to do this module again I would focus on time management so that I would be able to finish my wound and the seal head mascot mask which I regret I will not be able to finish for this process workbook.
In my props and production lessons I really enjoyed discovering the dynamic relationships between each crew member, the responsibilities of different people and how I would be able to fit into the system as well as being able to operate in an actual set with actors, sound, lighting costume and props. I loved the contrast of our final project with the first term collaboration project and being able to see how far we have all come as a crew now that we have learnt each others strengths and weaknesses. I do regret, however, that I did not choose my role as it was chosen for me; I didn't have any idea where in a crew I would want to fit and remained indecisive until the role of ASM was chosen for me. I think, looking back, while I did love being ASM, that I would prefer to have worked in props or as the SM.
However, I found the collaboration aspect of this project to really help my skills to understand others and talk to people with different perspectives and understand the priorities as well as the resourcefulness of my team as we were working with zero budget and allowing us to demonstrate the toolkits we have gained not just within this module but through our first year of the course.

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