

# Scenic Designer

*"The theatre, when all is said and done, is not life in miniature,  
but life enormously magnified, life hideously exaggerated."*

– H. L. Mencken

## **The Design Process**

- Determine the production schedule and budget.
- Read, assimilate, and understand the material being designed.
- Find out as much as you can about:
  - The material in the script.
  - The director's concept.
  - The production circumstances (Type of stage, budget, etc.)
- Decide on the show's "ism" (realism, expressionism, etc.)
- Do background research (books, periodicals, paintings, etc.)
- Do conceptual research (Create as many potential designs as possible)
- Start by doing thumbnail sketches or models.
- Choose the design that fits the best (this may be a mash-up of several designs)
- Create the following:
  - A ground plan
  - Front elevations
  - Models
  - Detail drawings
  - Paint elevations
  - Properties lists
  - Property sketches
- Evaluate the scenic design for safety.
- Discuss masking placement with the technical director.

## **Pre-Production**

- Attend pre-production meetings with the director and other design team members.
- Keep in mind that other people rely heavily on the scenery and it is therefore important to keep in contact with the director, technical director, stage manager, and other designers.
- Meet with the technical director to discuss your budget.
- The technical director will price your design.
- If you are over budget you are responsible for lowering your overall cost.

## **Rehearsal Process/Tech Week**

- You are required to attend production meetings.
  - Give a brief statement about the progress of the show's set.
- It is your responsibility to keep the scenic paperwork up to date and accurate.
  - When it is updated, be sure to give copies to the technical director and stage manager.
- If you have any concerns about the construction of crucial scenic units speak to the technical director immediately.
- Does your design require a hazer, fogger, or other atmosphere producing instruments?

- If yes, discuss this with the lighting designer, technical director, and director as soon as possible.

**Technical/Dress Rehearsals**

- If the set is not finished by tech week then you need to talk to the director and technical director about what corners can be cut.
- During technical and dress rehearsals sit in different seats to make sure that the masking is adequate from all angles.
- Ensure that all set pieces are in proper working order.
- Inform the technical director of any modifications or adjustments that need to occur.
- Inform the paint charge of any paint modifications that should be made.
- Pay careful attention to scene shifts.
- Discuss problems and possible solutions with the director, technical director, and stage manager.

**Scenic Designer Schedule**

<p>12 Weeks (84 Days) Out - Preliminary meetings with director and design team.</p>
<p>11 - 6 Weeks (77 - 42 Days) Out - Meetings continue. Meetings should include: research, photos, textbooks, concepts, renderings, practical research, etc.</p>
<p>6 Weeks Out - Scenic plate package should be completed and given to other designers, stage management, and the director.</p>
<p>5 Weeks (35 Days) Out – 3 Weeks (21Days) Out - The Build Period: As set pieces are completed, stage management should be informed so they can be incorporated into rehearsals as soon as possible. - Cooperation with the other aspects during this period will also have to happen. Electrics will have to hang some instruments before certain permanent set pieces can be installed, so the space will have to be shared.</p>
<p>2 Weeks (14 Days) Out - Hang should occur under the discretion of the technical director and master electrician (ensure there are no problems with lighting positions vs. scenic units, etc).</p>
<p>9 Days Out – Opening Night (Wednesday) - Except for a couple of last minute touch-ups and emergency builds, all aspects should be done before even the start of tech week.</p>

## Scenic Designer

All students working on a show must fill out this form. A separate form must be used for each position held. When complete, return this form to Eric Koger.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Production: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you have this position? (circle one)

I am in the THEA 104 class.

I am a volunteer.

I am in an Independent Study class. Name the class \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, I assert that I have not only read and understand the above contract, but also that I agree to follow and abide by it. I also understand that I will be held accountable for my actions and that my role in the production may be terminated in the case of extreme misconduct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_