

## Chapter 16: Costume Design

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### What is a costume?

Costume includes all clothing, underclothing, hairdressing, makeup, and accessories, such as hats, scarves, fans, canes, umbrellas, and jewelry, worn or carried by each character in a production

The design and appearance of costumes are the province of the costume designer



### **The Nature of Costume Design**

To be effective, costume designs for a production need to do the following:

- Reflect the production design team's agreed-upon interpretation of the production concept

- Exhibit a unity of style among all costume designs for a production

- Provide a visual reflection of the personality and nature of each character

- Provide visual information about the world of the play: locale, period, season, time of day, culture, and the socioeconomic, religious, and political environment

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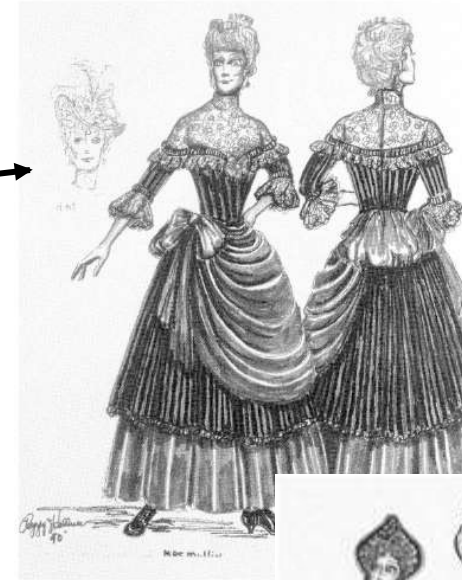
### Types of Costume Designs

#### Character Costume Designs

Designs that are dictated by specific information contained in the script

#### Decorative Costume Designs

Those costumes that appear to be no more than decorative elements in the general stage picture—extras, showgirls, etc.



Every costume in a production could be placed somewhere on this character/ decorative continuum

### **The Psychological Meaning of Clothes**

What a person wears, and how it is worn, says a great deal about that person and the society in which he or she lives

A certain type of clothing can be worn to conform to or rebel against a certain segment of society

Clothes can also be visible clues to the wearer's emotional state

### **Objective Information Provided by Clothes**

In addition to providing psychological clues, clothing can provide a variety of objective information about a person

Historical Period

Age

Gender

Socioeconomic Status

Occupation

Climate and Season

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### Objective Information Provided by Clothes

#### Historical Period

The shape and silhouette of garments can provide clear indications of their historical period



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### Objective Information Provided by Clothes

#### Age

In any period, the color, style, and fit of clothes provide information about the age of the wearer

Young people tend to reveal more of their bodies than do their elders





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### Objective Information Provided by Clothes

#### Gender

Throughout history, with a few exceptions, clothes have almost always clearly indicated the gender of the wearer





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### Objective Information Provided by Clothes

#### Socioeconomic Status

Social status has always been indicated with clothes

Ill-kempt clothes of homespun

Beautifully fashioned linens, silks, and satins



BALM  
IN  
GILEAD  
FRANK THAY



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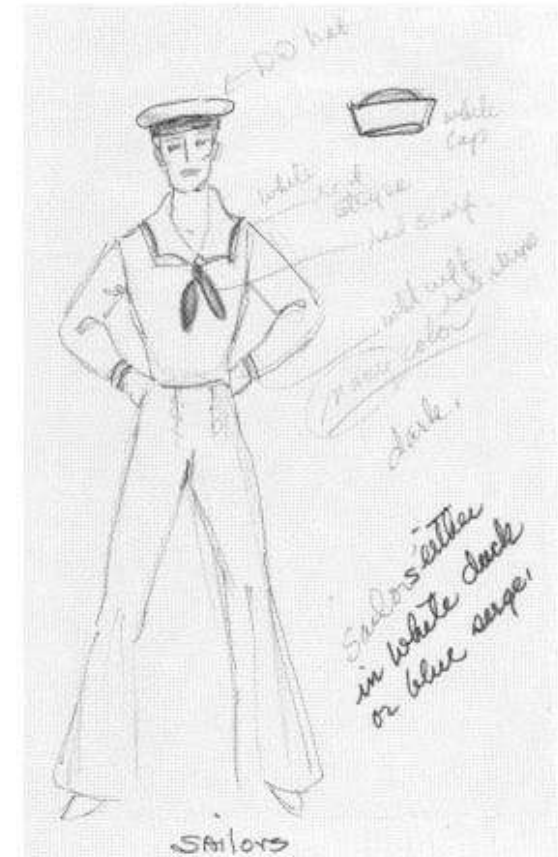
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### Objective Information Provided by Clothes

#### Occupation

Similar to the clues that clothing provides about a character's socioeconomic status, clothes can also tell us about a person's job

Uniforms are an obvious indicator



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### Objective Information Provided by Clothes

#### Climate and Season

If we see someone bundled up in a heavy fur coat, we assume that the weather is cold

Dark hues, heavy fabrics, and multiple layers are indicators of cold climates

Light colors, lightweight fabrics, and fewer clothes are indicators of warmer weather



### **General Considerations for Costume Design**

A variety of diverse considerations and sources of information affect the work of the costume designer

Analyzing the script

Other Conceptual Considerations

Practical Considerations

### **General Considerations for Costume Design**

#### Analyzing the script

The costume designer reads the script to gather various information about the play and the characters

The script provides factual information about period, time, season, climate, gender, age, socioeconomic status, occupation, etc.

Script also provides clues to the emotional quality of the play and the relationships among the characters

### **General Considerations for Costume Design**

#### Other Conceptual Considerations

Stereotypical costuming

Character evolution

Costume stylization

Interpretation of period

Interpretation of color and fabric

### General Considerations for Costume Design

#### Stereotypical costuming

The actor, not the costume, is the primary vehicle for conveying a character's nature and personality

Costume designers normally avoid stereotypical designs that proclaim who the character is

The obvious exception are production concepts that are two-dimensional and cartoonish—*Guys and Dolls*



### **General Considerations for Costume Design**

#### Character Evolution

Costumes need to match the growth and change that characters experience during the course of the production

# General Considerations for Costume Design

## Costume Stylization

The degree of stylization dictated by the script and production concept must be recognized by the costume designers

# General Considerations for Costume Design

## Interpretation of Period

Costumes make a statement that visually unifies the historical period, the style of the script, and the production concept

However, any historical period has a plethora of design styles with subtle variations

Costume designers need to distill that mound of information into details that represent the essence of the period

### **General Considerations for Costume Design**

#### Interpretation of Color and Fabric

Historical research will acquaint the costume designer with the color and types of fabrics used in a particular historical period

The colors and fabrics selected must be appropriate to the production concept and the individual characterizations

# **General Considerations for Costume Design**

## Practical Considerations

Needs of the Actor

Production Venue

Budget

Construction Demands of the Design

Renting Costumes

Buying Costumes

Modifying Stock Costumes

# General Considerations for Costume Design

## Needs of the Actor

The actor's needs can be divided into two categories: physical and psychological

The physical needs: the costume should fit, be reasonably comfortable, and shouldn't inhibit any necessary and appropriate motion

The simple act of putting on a costume psychologically helps the actor become the character



**The hobble skirt requires that women wearing them take tiny steps**

### **General Considerations for Costume Design**

#### Production Venue

Costume design is also influenced by the production venue

The small, delicately tinted pastel embroidered flowers on a blouse would be completely lost in a large proscenium theatre



# General Considerations for Costume Design

## Budget

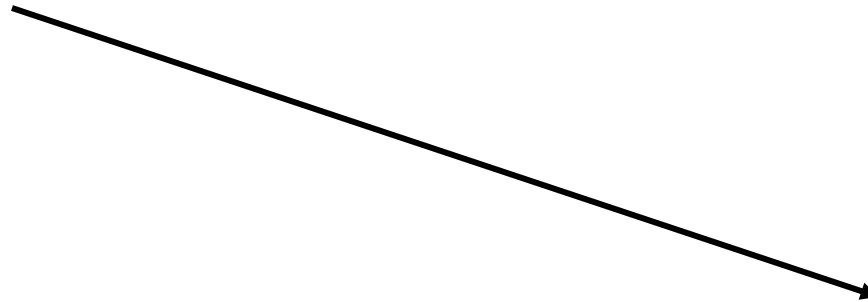
The amount of money in the costume budget, and the time and staff available, have a direct effect on design choices

### General Considerations for Costume Design

#### Construction Demands of the Design

Construction demands are predicated on the number of costumes in the production, the complexity of the individual designs, the budget, and the expertise of available personnel

While costumes may be built, they can also be rented, bought, or “pulled” from stock



**Pull**—remove a costume from storage for use in a production

# General Considerations for Costume Design

## Renting Costumes

Carefully tailored, period-specific items such as military uniforms and expensive men's suits are frequently rented

# General Considerations for Costume Design

## Buying Costumes

When producing a contemporary production, costume designers frequently buy clothes “off the rack” and modify them

# General Considerations for Costume Design

## Modifying Stock Costumes

Educational and regional professional companies frequently have a stock of costumes that have been used in previous productions

### **Organizational Paperwork**

The costume designer must keep track of amazing amounts of detail regarding every costume in the production

It is essential that he or she make copious and complete notes

Most costume shops have a “costume bible”

This book holds all the information regarding the planning and construction of a particular show

### Organizational Paperwork

While the specific information contained in a “costume bible” obviously varies from company to company

However, it normally will include the following

- Cast list and production contact sheets
- Measurement sheets
- Calendars and deadlines
- Costume plots and lists
- Budget sheets
- Rental contracts and pull lists
- Copies of renderings
- Swatches and dyeing instructions
- Production notes from the stage manager



## Chapter 16: Costume Design

### Organizational Paperwork

#### Costume Chart

The costume chart is used to visually plot what each character wears in each scene in the play

Some costume designers attach color samples to each listing so that they can see the development of the overall color scheme of the production

Wardrobe personnel use the costume chart as a guide when dressing the actors

Romeo & II Juliet	I:1	I:2	I:3	I:4	I:5	II:1	II:2	II:3	II
Romeo	Cream ransoms Beige silk shirt Beige shoes, socks & belt	Same		White linen suit Black knit shirt Black belt & shoes	Add mask and cape	Same	Same	Same	
Juliet			Peach kimono Beige slip		White dress White petticoat White shoes Nylons Mask		Kimono Slip		
Nurse			Day dress Nylons Shoes Necklace		Even dress Shoes same Jewelry Mask?		Voice only		
Capulet	2 pc. gray silk suit Gray striped shirt Rose tie & handkerchief Black shoes	Same			U. browned top Cane/wand Fox shirt Black bow tie socks & shoes Wing handkerchief Cufflinks, studs				
Lady II Capulet	Blue knit dress, belt & shoes slip, nylons Necklace Earrings, purse Brooch, hair		Same		Black velvet gown Variety Bracelet Black shoes Mask				
Mercutio	White fox shirt Black leather pant Black boots			Same Add blue cape Fabric sword	Same Add mask	Same			
Timoth off Day	Sunday about noon	Sunday, minutes later	Sunday late afternoon, early evening	Sunday late afternoon, pre-party	Sunday night, party, visual climax	Sunday night, late post-party			

## Chapter 16: Costume Design

# Organizational Paperwork

## Costume List

The costume list specifies every element, including accessories, of each costume worn by every actor

Broken into two section, men and women (in larger productions it can be further divided into principal men, principal women, etc)

Quick changes are noted

The list is used by dressers and wardrobe crew as a checklist for the costumes in a production

PRINCIPAL MEN	
Romeo	1. Cream sweater, beige silk slacks, beige shoes, beige socks, beige belt
	2. White linen suit, black knit shirt, black belt, black socks and shoes
	3. Mask, cape MEDIUM QUICK CHANGES
Capulet	4. Two-piece gray silk suit, gray/white-striped shirt, rose tie and handkerchief, black socks/shoes
	5. Double breasted tux, cummerbund, tux shirt, black bow tie, black socks/shoes, white handkerchief, cufflinks and studs (gold)
	6. Pajamas, robe, slippers
Mercutio	7. White tux shirt, black tux trousers, dinner jacket, black boots
	8. Blue cape, baldric sword
Extra Men	
	18. Guard I — dark gray suit, black shoes, black shirt, black tie
	19. Guard II — dark gray suit, black shoes, black shirt, black tie
	20. Servant I — black dress pants, white shirt, black bow tie
PRINCIPAL WOMEN	
Juliet	9. Pink kimono, beige slip
	10. White dress, white petticoat, white shoes, nylons mask
	11. Cream skirt, yellow sweater, cream nylons/shoes, straw hat
Nurse	12. Day dress, nylons, shoes, necklace
	13. Evening dress, matching shoes, jewelry, mask
	14. Shawl
Lady Capulet	15. Blue silk dress, matching belt, slip, nylons, blue shoes, necklace, earrings, bracelet, fur
	16. Black velvet gown, earrings, bracelet, black shoes, mask
	17. Pink nightgown, blue robe, blue slippers
Extra Women	
	21. Servant I — black maid's uniform, black shoes, nylons
	22. Servant II — black maid's uniform, black shoes, nylons

## Chapter 16: Costume Design

### Organizational Paperwork

#### Character-Actor Dressing List

This list is used by the actors and dressers during dress rehearsals and performances

Posted in the actors' dressing rooms or any place where actors change costumes

It details everything, including accessories, that the actor wears in each scene

DRESSING LIST	
PLAY: <input type="checkbox"/>	Romeo & Juliet
ROLE: <input type="checkbox"/>	Capulet
ACTOR: <input type="checkbox"/>	Carl Douglas
DRESSER: <input type="checkbox"/>	Ted Freeman
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
I: i — 2-piece gray suit, gray/white striped shirt, rose tie & handkerchief, black shoes & socks	
I: ii — Same	
I: iv — Double-breasted tux, cummerbund, tux shirt, black bow tie, black shoes/socks, white handkerchief, gold cufflinks and studs	
III: i — Same as Ii	
III: iv — Same as Ii	
III: v — Pajamas, robe, slippers	

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### Organizational Paperwork

#### Costume Calendar

The costume calendar helps the costume designer budget time and provides a visualization of how much time is to be devoted to each phase of the process

To be effective, it must include all facets of the process

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
August	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		←	CONCEPT MEETINGS			Production Meeting 9 AM	→
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
		←	RESEARCH/DESIGN			Prod. Meeting 9 AM	→
September	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		←	DESIGN			Prod. Meeting 9 AM	→
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		←	SHOPPING			Prod. Meeting 9 AM	→
October	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
		←	SHOP CONSTRUCTION			Prod. Meeting 9 AM	→
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		←	SHOP CONSTRUCTION			Prod. Meeting 9 AM	→
November	29	30	1	2	3	4	5
		←	SHOP CONSTRUCTION			1st Tech Dressing	Dress Parade
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		1st Dress Preview	2nd Dress Preview	3rd Dress Preview	Opening Performances	→	
December	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
			←	PERFORMANCES			→

## Chapter 16: Costume Design

### Visual Presentation of the Costume Design

Costume designers create several types of drawings

Preliminary sketches

Costume layout

Final costume sketch or rendering



JANIS EDEL



LITTLE SHIP OF TERRORS  
JANIS EDEL

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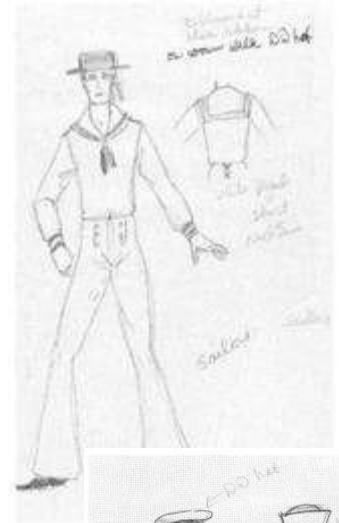
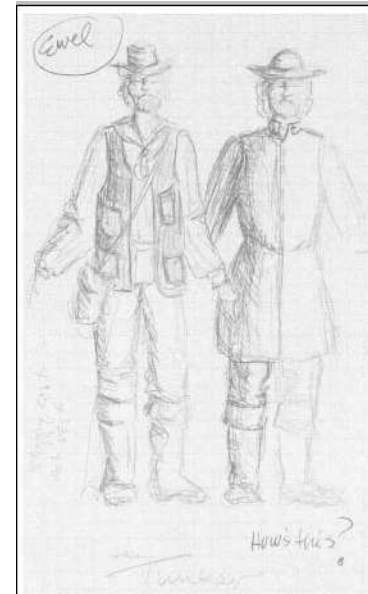
### Visual Presentation of the Costume Design

#### Preliminary sketches

The time when the first visible results of the creative process appear on paper

These sketches drawn in pen or pencil, are the first tangible results of the synthesis of the costume designer's thoughts, ideas, and research

They are rough sketches—like the thumbnail sketches of the scene designer





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### Visual Presentation of the Costume Design

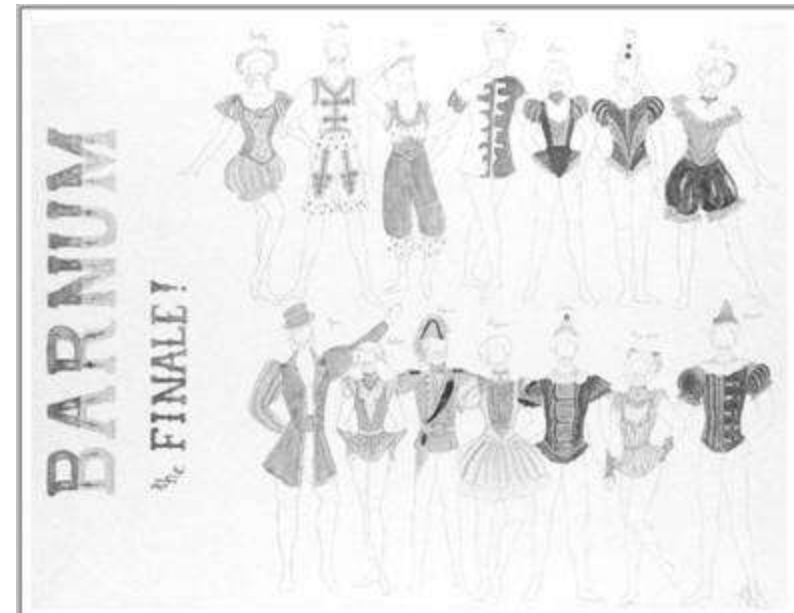
#### Costume Layout

The costume layout is a group of small figures that illustrate the costume designs for a number of characters

Sketched in pencil or ink, the costumes may be fully or partially colored

The purpose is to provide an overall view of the costume concept for the entire production

Costume layouts are used to provide the director and costume designer with an overview of how the costumes will look and work together





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### Visual Presentation of the Costume Design

#### Costume Sketch

Created by the costume designer, the costume sketch or plate is a full-color drawing that should give a strong indication of character, and the costume should look like

Drawn with a single character per plate, the sketch should provide clear and accurate information about the line and detail of the garment

They often contain swatches of fabric, notes, and the name of the character and scene in which the costume is worn

If available, photocopies of these research materials are frequently provided



CAMINO REAL  
ESMERALDA

