

APPLYING RESEARCH TO A REALIZED THEATRICAL DESIGN



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Abstract:

When analyzing a theatrical performance many outside eyes do not see the level of research and research application that happens to generate the finished product. Through this educational poster the presenter shows that research is not only a staple of the generation of all theatrical designs but shows that when applied with thoughtful execution said research enhances and magnifies the design and the over all final product: the live performance.

Introduction:

"All aspects of a scenic designer's work can be approached as craft. The challenge is to recognize the importance of the decisions that need to be made. Even the most intangible, can be approached with craft. The study of the text, research, and conceptual thinking are skills best practiced and mastered with planning thoroughness, and purpose."- Robert Klingelhofer.

For the production of Truth and Other Lies this February I had to work with both the tangible and intangible parts of the craft. I was able to utilize trial and error approaches to many design elements while still holding on to research elements and director values. The importance of sharing this process is to show how much deeper the art of Theater goes. It is not a simple create and perform process. There are countless hours of research and "elegant solutions" to be had. This poster is designed to give a tangible breakdown and understanding of this process through scenic models, renderings, image research, and photos of the realized production.

References:

All images of the live show are courtesy of Phil Brulotte
All images of designs are Kathalina Thorpe's.

Acknowledgements:

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Research Process:

-Group Discussions: Give the "Wh" questions so that the designer has a place to begin their research and in a devised theater piece this is integral to building all elements of the world in which the play happens. This is also unique because designers of devised pieces may be asked to begin designs before that are presented a script.

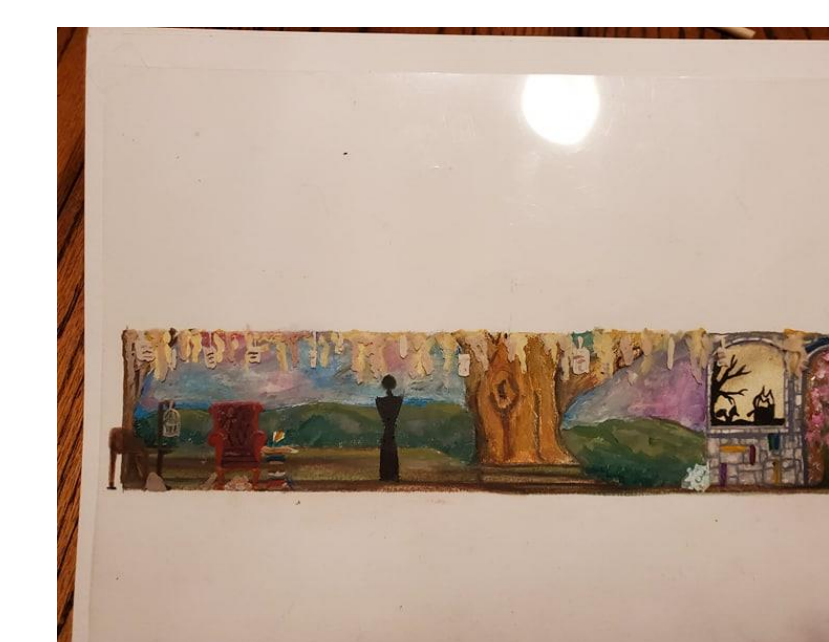
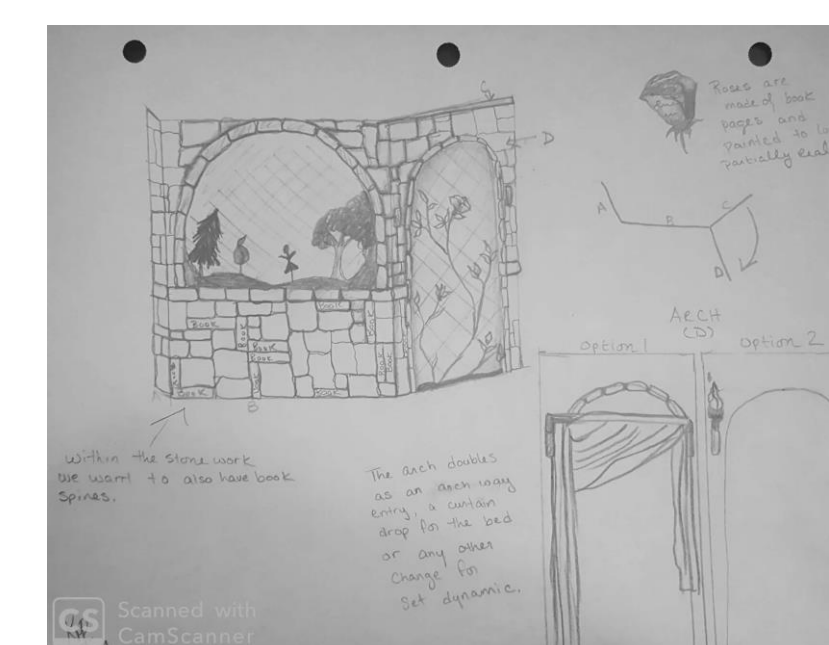
-Story Boarding and Image Research: With the early research for design processes the first thing you look for is a concept and that first image or set of images will guide the kind of inspiration that you look for. With the use of myths and legends some of the sources most valuable to the designer are primary and secondary source art works. Once the concept is established hours or research for images to create a story board commences.

-Thumbnail Sketches: Before ever putting a pencil to sketch pad the designer also does research on scale, perspective and the space in which they are drawing their scenery in. That information can come from drafting's of the space and the technical director.

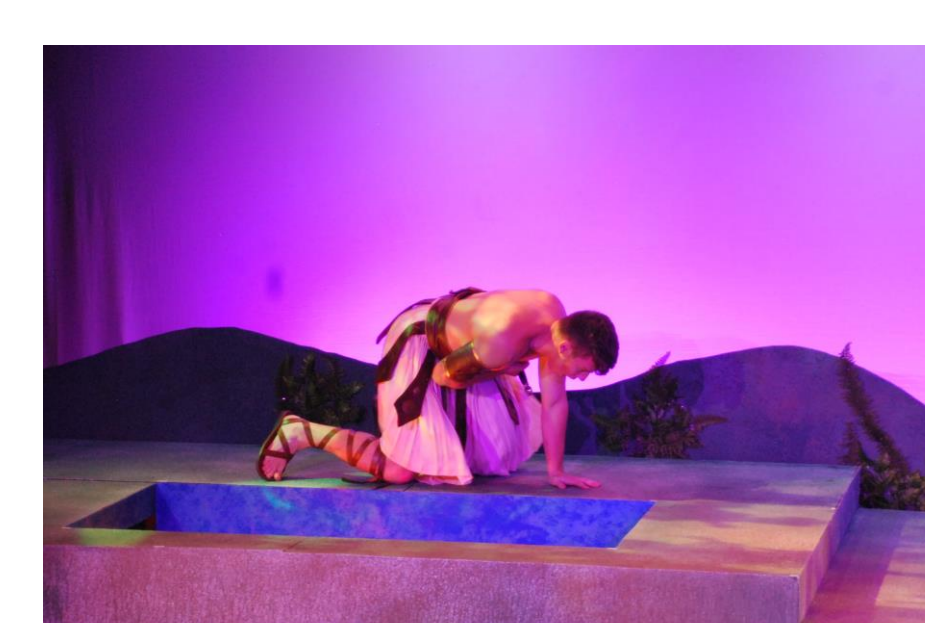
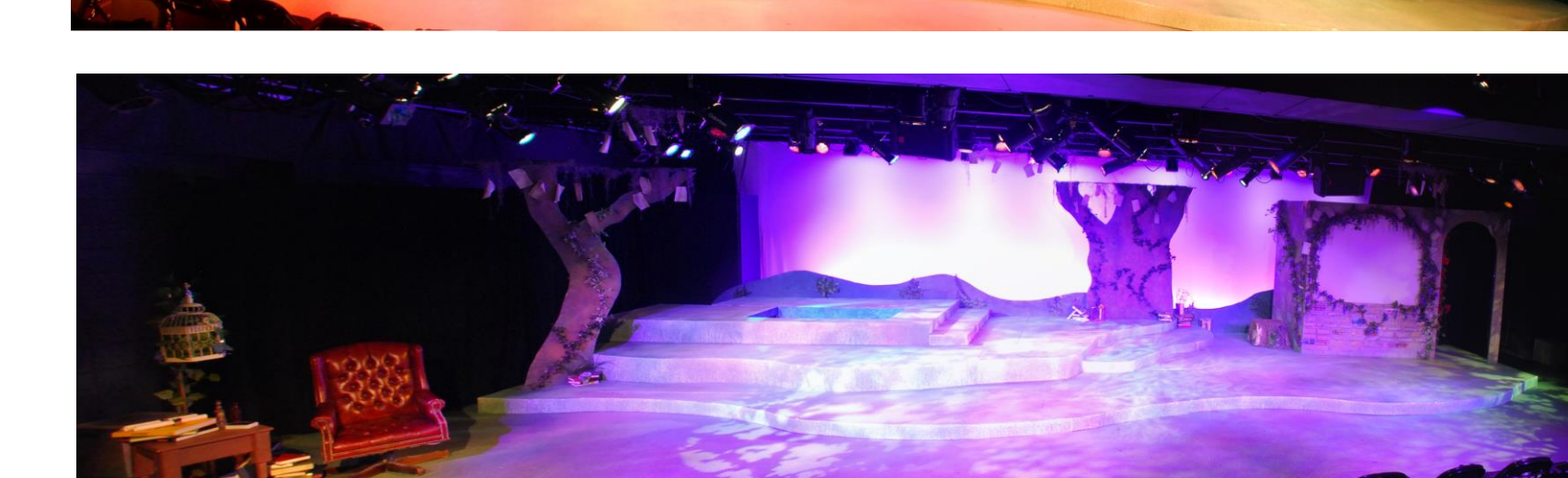
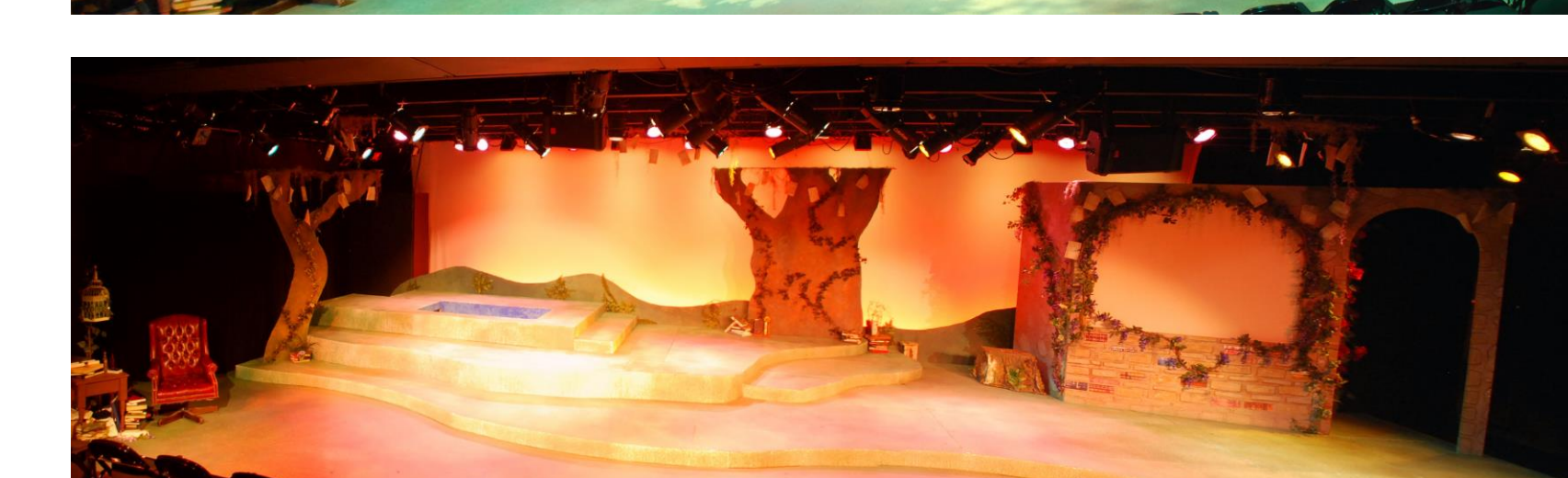
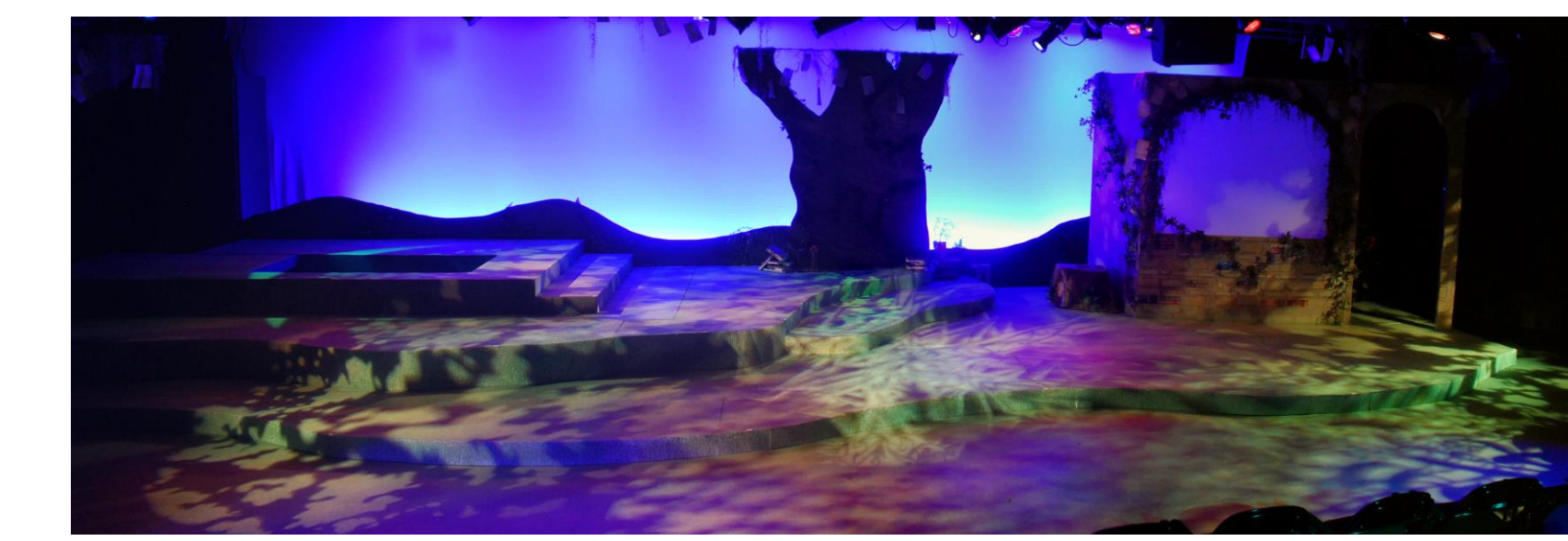
-The Design Presentation: The designer needs to do research on their audience and on how to appeal to the crowd and sell the concept. At this point everything is just an idea and the team needs to be sold on the vision. There is a lot of leg work that goes in to making a sales pitch and laying out an appealing presentation.

-Drafting Ground Plans of Platforming: Requires research of regulations on the industry standards for height and depth of steps and attending rehearsals to see how the cast hopes to use the space you are designing for them.

-After the Appearance of the Script: The team will meet again for design revisions and the research that goes in to putting the polish on the scenery is looking at each character in the script and each location and dissecting that information and applying the primary and secondary image research to additional sketches and renderings for the director so that the designer can complete the drafting's for the technical director and create a scale model and paint elevations for the rest of the team to reference.



Results:



Conclusion:

Though Scenic Design does not look like it requires research because not everything is quantitative or analytical when you view the finished product the nuances shown in the step by step break down of the design process shows that there is indeed a great deal of research in various topics to create the final product: The Staged Performance.