

Vocabulary

These key words or phrases (underlined the first time they are used in the text) are essential to understanding the material in this chapter. You should make them part of your theatrical vocabulary and use them in your work.

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| atmosphere | in scale | drafting conventions | thumb-nail sketch |
| properties plot | interior | exterior | shifting axis |
| isometric projection | oblique projection | orthographic projection | center line |

Introduction

This set of exercises is intended to help you as a student-actor understand your character’s environment and to create a COMPLETE place for your character(s), to be able to walk around it, see it, use objects in it, to begin to *live* in the place as the character. *To establish an exact locale, atmosphere, and time.*

You will ask such questions as What do you do in this place? What are the basic physical requirements (doors, windows, furniture, etc.), action requirements (blocking and movement), and the socioeconomic elements of your place? What kind of mood does this place create in you? Every place has a mood or atmosphere with past memories (a church, a bar, a playground, a gym, a parade).

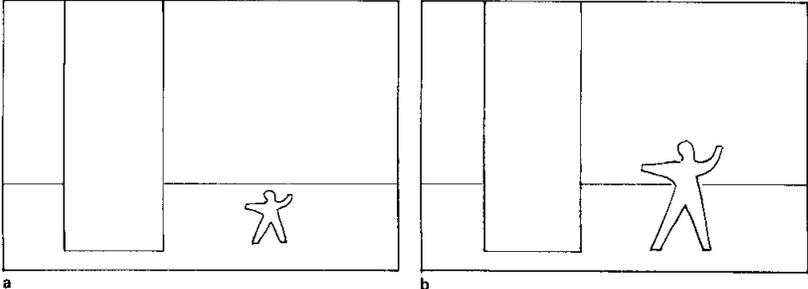
The following pages of illustrations will demonstrate designs that utilize:

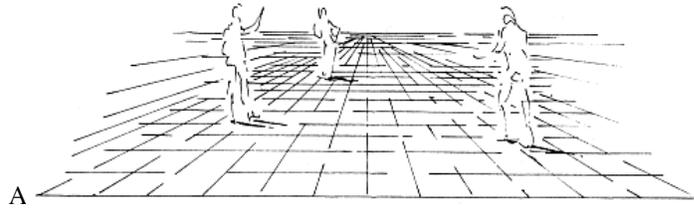
- **Scale, Space and Form, Rhythm**
- **Types of Settings:** The Box Set, Interior, Exterior, Selective Setting, Types of Minimum Scenery (The Cut-down Setting, The Fragmentary Setting, The Profile Setting, The Minimum Setting), Simultaneous Setting, Unit Set, and The Skeleton Set.
- **Styles of Scenery:** Realism, Simplified Realism, Impressionism, Expressionism.

Scale, Space and Form, Rhythm

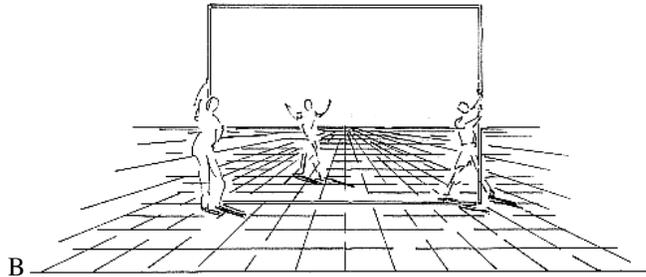
Let’s look for a moment at the use of Scale, Space and Form, Rhythm, and Line and Mass in theatrical design in the illustrations on the next three pages.

First Scale: The feeling of scale in a stage setting is linked to the size of the human figure. In these two examples, the design forms are identical in size (illustration a and b). Their scale changes in relation to the size of the figure in the composition.





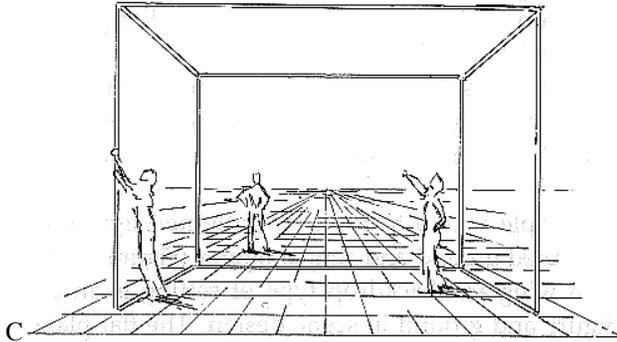
A



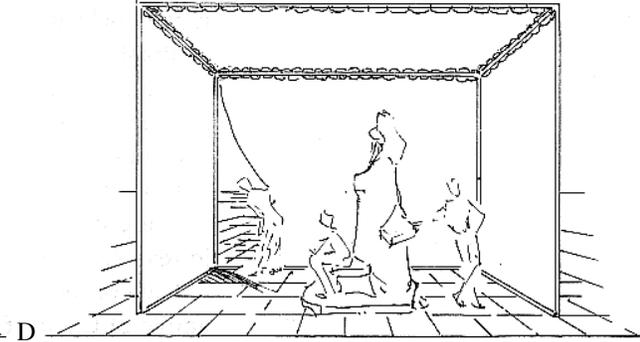
B

Illustrations: SPACE AND FORM A: Undefined space

B: Two-dimensional space frame

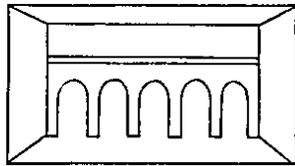


C

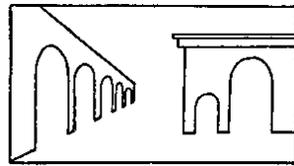


D

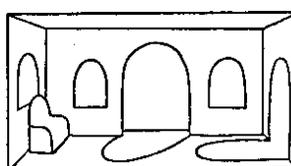
Illustrations: SPACE AND FORM C: Three-dimensional space frame D: Hollow solid surrounding a sculptural solid



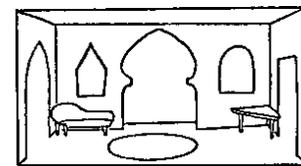
Identical repeats



Progressive repeats

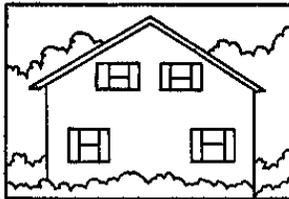


The shape D is over repeated

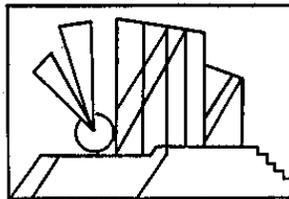


Here nothing is repeated

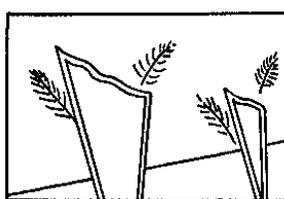
Illustrations: RHYTHM. Similar to the rhythm of music and the dance. ⁶⁰



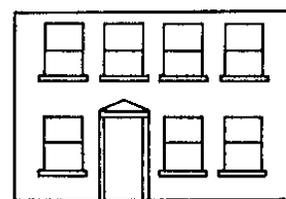
SEVERITY



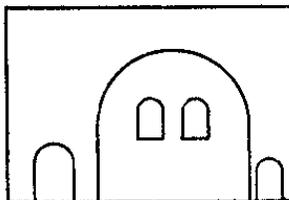
CONFUSION



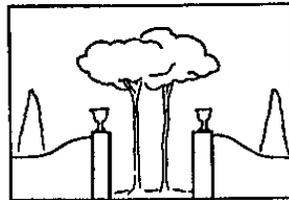
DELICACY



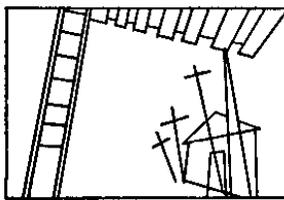
MONOTONY



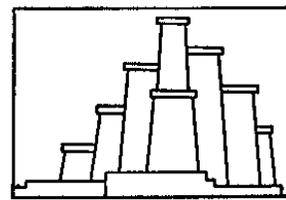
REPETITION



DIGNITY



DESOLATION

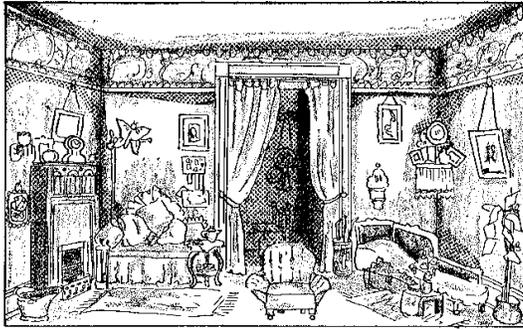


NOBILITY

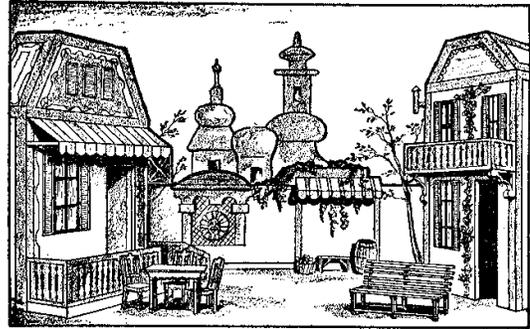
Illustrations: Eight examples of LINE AND MASS

⁶⁰ Friedrich and Fraser, *Scenery Design for the Amateur Stage*.

Types of Settings



(A)



(B)

(A) A BOX Setting containing naturalistic detail, including three-dimensional trim, a ceiling and carefully chosen set dressings. (For *A Doll's House*) (B) A full EXTERIOR Setting, including the use of a cyclorama, profile steeples, and freestanding wall and house units. (For *The Bartered Bride*)

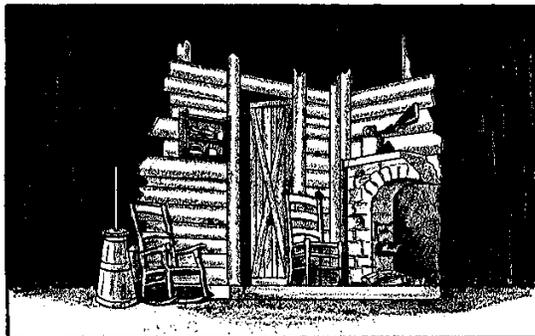


(C)

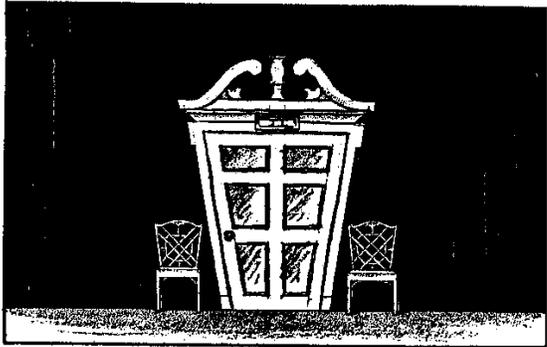


(D)

In SELECTIVE SETS (C through G) certain elements of a setting are selected, while others are not chosen. (C) A SELECTIVE Setting. The false proscenium stays throughout, a living room scene is set up permanently behind the black stage draperies, and the barroom (C) and a prison office are flown. (For *Uncle Harry*) (D) A CUT-DOWN Setting. The walls are cut down in direct relation to the architecture of the room. (The laboratory in Maxwell Anderson's *The Star Wagon*.)

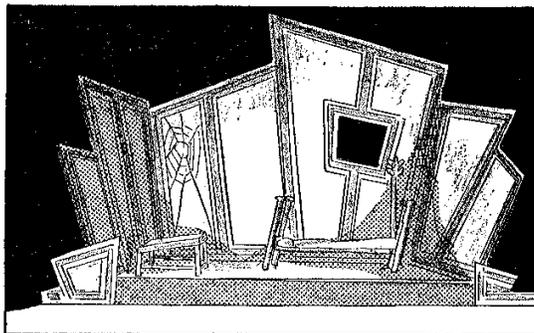


(E)

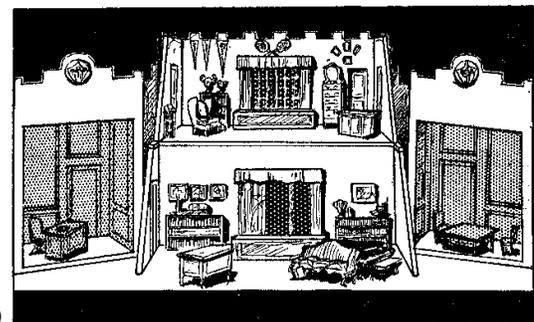


(F)

(E) A FRAGMENTARY Setting (a type of selective sets) for a cabin. (For *Dark of the Moon*) (F) A PROFILE Setting for a hallway scene in a musical comedy. All except the chairs are painted two-dimensionally. (For *Anything Goes*)

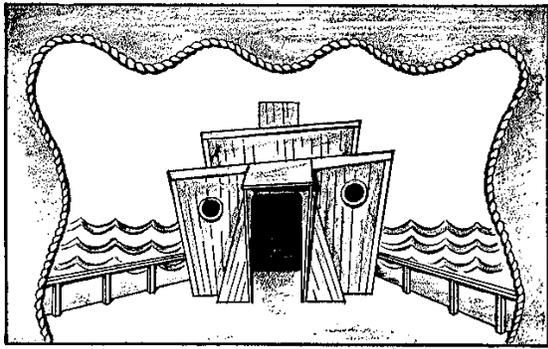


(G)

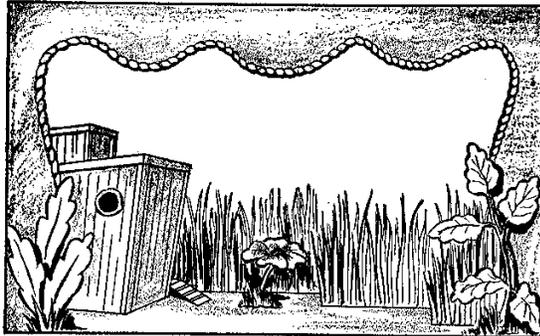


(H)

(G) A MINIMUM SETTING, on a wagon, an expressionistic interpretation. (For *The Inspector General*) (H) A SIMULTANEOUS SETTING. The central unit represents two rooms in a dormitory. (For *She Loves Me Not*)

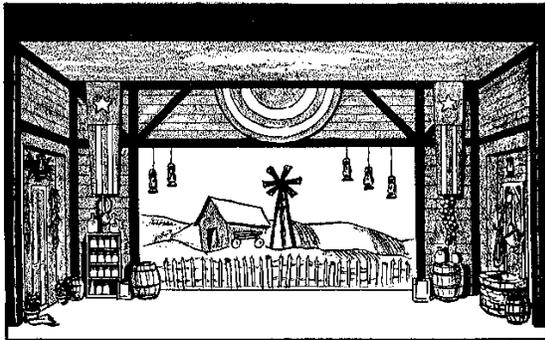


(I)

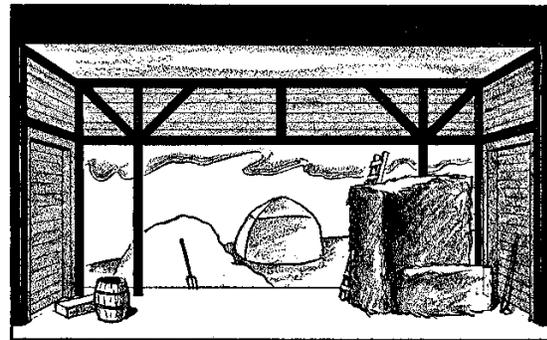


(J)

THE UNIT SETTING. (I & J) Two arrangements of a unit. The ark is on casters and is moved about from scene to scene. (For Andre Obey's *Noah*)



(K)

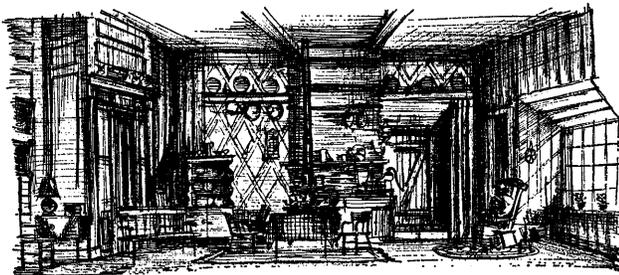


(L)

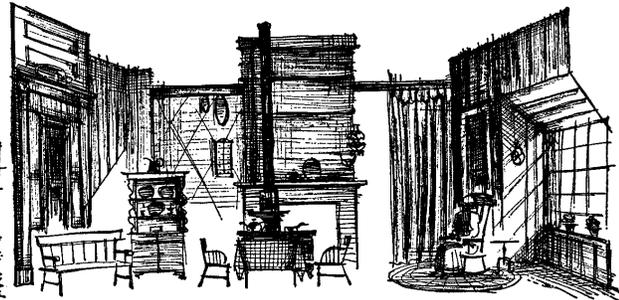
SKELETON SET. (K & L) Two skeleton arrangements. Note the effects obtained by the changing of the side plugs, and the two additional center openings for hay shed scene. (For *Green Grow the Lilacs*)

Styles of Scenery

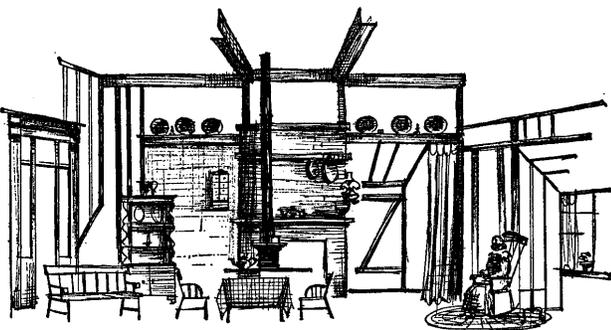
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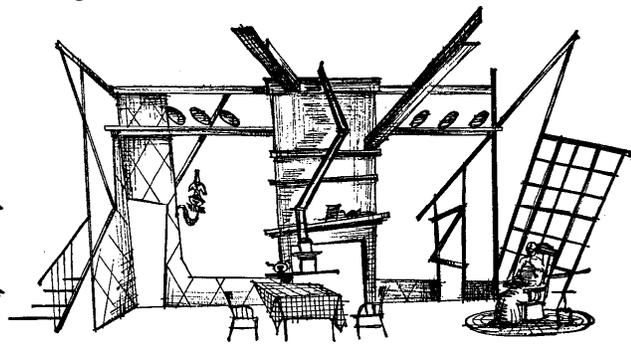
Realism



Simplified Realism



Impressionism



Expressionism

⁶¹ From Edward A Wright, *Understanding Today's Theatre*, Second Edition.

Props make a difference

Stage properties can be used to provide information about the character and period of the set. All three of these settings have the exact same walls, doors and windows, only the stage properties have been changed. ⁶²



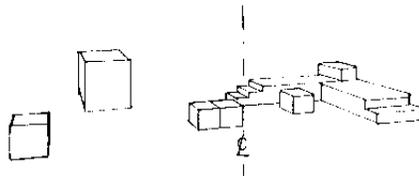
A Set Design Check List

Here is a check list you might use to judge your work before it passes into the realm of public domain to be picked apart by far less gentle critics than yourself.

DOES THE SETTING:

- Comply with the necessary specifications of the author?
- Correlate with the style of the writing? Naturalistic, Realistic, Stylistic, Minimalistic, etc.?
- Reflect the literary type of the play?
- Capture the mood of the play? (atmosphere)
- Reflect the character of the inhabitants? Taste, Habits, Backgrounds, Financial Status, Interests (talents, hobbies), Educational or Cultural Level.
- Reflect the place (locale, country, nation, region)?
- Establish the environment? Place the action? Reinforce the action? Dress the action?
- Fulfill the needs as to: Playing areas? Playing levels? Playing planes?
- Openings (doors windows) Furniture and properties?
- Special action requirements? Relation of the setting to off stage places?
- Utilize the principles of good design:
 - Emphasis? Balance? Unity? Variety? Rhythm?
- Utilize interpretively the elements of design? Line? Color? Mass?
- Serve the actors as a tool rather than a competitive force?
- Meet audience requirements Pleasant or interesting to look at? Without anachronisms?
- Styles of Scenery Naturalism Realism Impressionism Expressionism
- Stylization Formalism Theatricalism Constructivism
- Forms of Scenery Box Set / Interior Exterior Unit Set Simultaneous Setting
- Minimum Scenery: The Cut-down Setting The Skeleton Setting
- The Fragmentary Setting The Profile Setting

⁶² J. Michael Gillette, *Theatrical Design and Production*.



WORKSHEET: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Instructions

1. Write down all the information from the assigned play, scene, or monologue regarding the technical needs (sets, properties, lights, and sound) on the worksheet on **ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages** . This will include the number of sets (Interiors and Exteriors), where the action of your piece takes place (a brief exact description), when is it (year, historical period), what time of day is it, what season of the year is it (inside and/or outside conditions), where is it (Country, region), and other technical requirements, including sound requirements—don't forget atmosphere sounds (sounds that establish a mood), and special production problems (if any: lighting, sound, etc.)
 2. If these requirements are not stated in the script, make them up based on inference.
 3. Include the basic physical requirements (doors, windows, furniture, etc.), action requirements (blocking and movement), and the socioeconomic elements.
- Neatness, completeness, and clarity are a must and will be graded.

FOR YOUR WORKSHEET ASSIGNMENT GO TO

<http://sfsotatheatre.org/>

click on:

ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages 

and click on:

 **WORKSHEET: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Duplicate as needed for your use.

WORKSHEET: SCENERY/PROPERTIES PLOT

Instructions

Create your character's Scenery/Properties Plot on the worksheet on **ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages** . List and describe in detail all the props and scenery that you touch, see, and deal with. Neatness, completeness, and clarity are a must and will be graded.

FOR YOUR WORKSHEET ASSIGNMENT GO TO

<http://sfsotatheatre.org/>

click on:

ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages 

and click on:

 **WORKSHEET: SCENERY/PROPERTIES PLOT**

Duplicate as needed for your use.

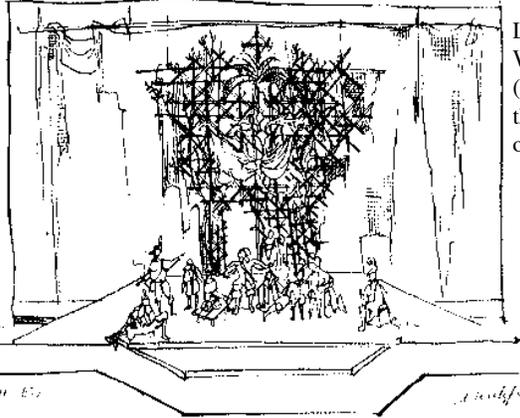
THE THUMB-NAIL SKETCH

Introduction

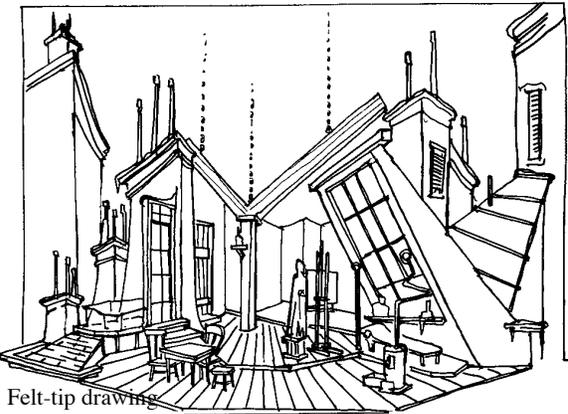
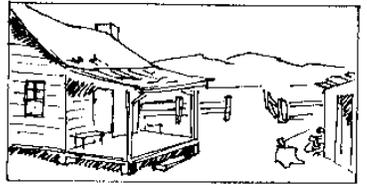
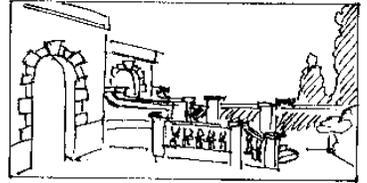
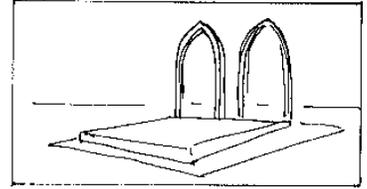
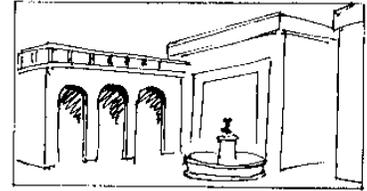
Small, rough thumbnail or idea sketches are the most casual and basic type of theatrical sketch. The first thumbnails, usually in pencil, are made as you start formulating your visual ideas. They help you “see” with a pencil.

Examples

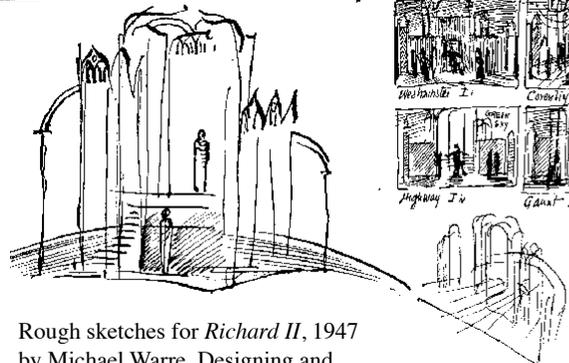
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Line drawing in ink by Ed Wittstein for *As You Like It* (The Forest of Arden) shows the basic idea of the set onstage.



Felt-tip drawing



Rough sketches for *Richard II*, 1947 by Michael Warre, Designing and making Stage Scenery

⁶³ right series J. Michael Gillette, *Theatrical Design and Production*.

WORKSHEET: YOUR THUMB-NAIL SKETCH(S)

Instructions

1. The scene/play partners will together discuss, design, and each draw a series of thumb-nail sketches of the setting.
2. Show all major objects in the setting (furniture, windows, doors, walls, etc.)
3. Before starting look at the examples of various sketches above as reference. Also look over the earlier pages on composition, styles and types of scenery.

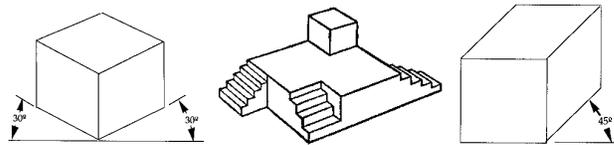
THEATRICAL DRAWING TECHNIQUES

Introduction

Other than ground plans (top view of the set) and perspective elevations (front view of the set) of scenery, the theatre student needs to be familiar with three other drawing techniques, isometric projection, oblique projection, and orthographic projection (all illustrated below). Familiarize yourself with the following illustrations and be prepared to draw an isometric view of an object from viewing an orthographic projection of that object, and visa versa.

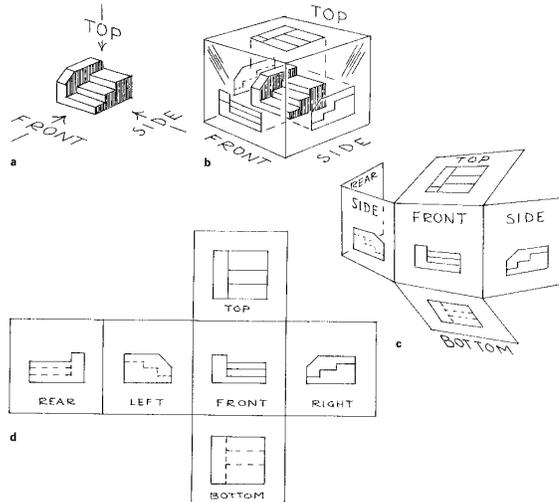
Example

Isometric drawing is drawing “in the cube”; in other words, the third dimension of depth is added. No attempt is made to show true perspective. Parallel lines remain parallel to one another instead of converging to a vanishing point. The normal point of view for an isometric drawing is usually somewhat above the object, looking at it from a corner. The third dimension is usually drawn at a 30° angle and is kept to scale.



(Left and center) Two Isometric Projections (Right) Oblique Projection (center drawing from: Friederich and Fraser, *Scenery Design for the Amateur Stage*.)

Oblique Projection is a method of drawing in three-dimensions in which the most complicated view (usually the front view) is at right angle to the line of sight. The remaining sides are drawn at between 30° and 45°. The orthographic projection, as shown below, simply put, shows all views of an object (front, sides, top, bottom): (a) Pictorial view of a three-step unit; (b) the three-step unit surrounded by a transparent cube with projection of each side; (c) the cube unfolded; (d) the view alignment of the three-step unit.⁶⁴



⁶⁴ based on material by W. Oren Parker and Harvey K. Smith, *Scene Design and Stage Lighting*, 3rd Edition.

WORKSHEET: SKETCH QUIZ

Instructions

Take this quiz on sketching techniques when assigned. These exercises help you to continue developing “seeing with a pencil.”

FOR YOUR WORKSHEET ASSIGNMENT GO TO

<http://sfsotatheatre.org/>

click on:

ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages

and click on:

WORKSHEET: SKETCH QUIZ

Duplicate as needed for your use.

HOW TO USE A SCALE

Introduction

You will need to be able to use an “architect’s scale,” a special triangular ruler created to measure in various scales.⁶⁵



Illustration: Architect’s scale rule with twelve scales (four per side).

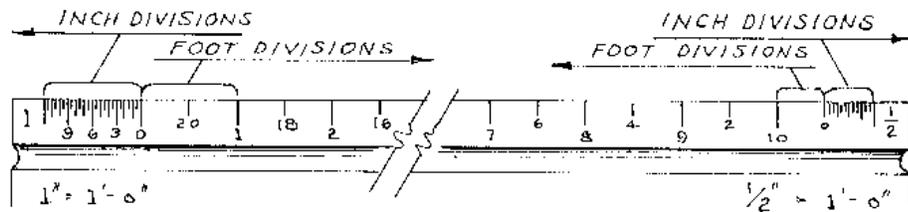
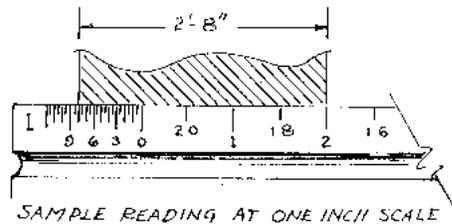


Illustration: Shows one face to demonstrate the method of reading a scale rule. The face shown contains two scales: 1" = 1'-0" (on the left) and 1/2" = 1'-0" (on the right). To read the 1" scale, for example, inches are read to the left of zero while foot divisions are read to the right of zero, as shown below. This shows a reading of a surface 2'-8" in dimension at the scale of 1" = 1'-0".

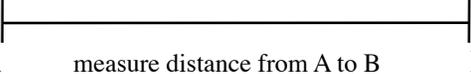


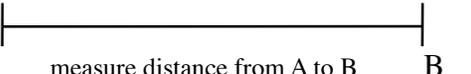
⁶⁵ based on material by W. Oren Parker and Harvey K. Smith, *Scene Design and Stage Lighting*, 3rd Edition.

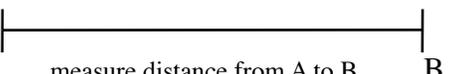
WORKSHEET: HOW TO USE A SCALE.

Instructions

Take this quiz on the techniques of using a scale when assigned. In this series of exercises, use your architect's ruler to figure out the following measurements.

#1  → in 1/2" scale = _____

#2  → in 1/4" scale = _____

#3  → in 1/2" scale = _____

#4  → in 1/2" scale = _____

ASSIGNMENT: THE GROUND PLAN

Introduction

Until a thumbnail design is translated into "scale," there is no guarantee the setting will work.

Instructions

The scene partners together will discuss, design, and draw on the **WORKSHEET: DRAW A WHERE GROUND PLAN** (in **ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages**) a detailed ground plan in pencil of the setting of their scene. The ground plan is to be based on their earlier, mutually decided on thumbnail sketch. Show all major objects in the setting (furniture, windows, doors, walls, etc.)

Before you begin, look again at, and use as reference, the standard ground plan symbols on page 74 in the Where chapter and the examples of various ground plans in the same chapter. Consider shifting the axis (or raking) of your ground plan as shown in that chapter.

Try to stay "in scale." Remember standard theatrical scales are 1/2"=1'-0" or 1/4"=1'-0".

You must also check the ground plan for naturalness of furniture positions, variety of acting areas and for sightlines. Sightlines are lines of vision from seats in extreme positions in the auditorium as shown below.

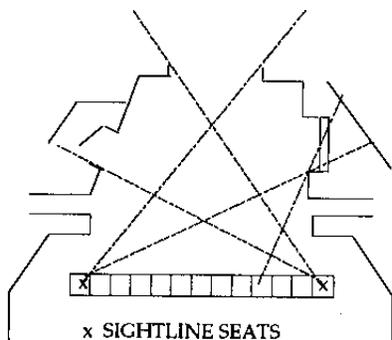


Illustration: Horizontal Sightlines

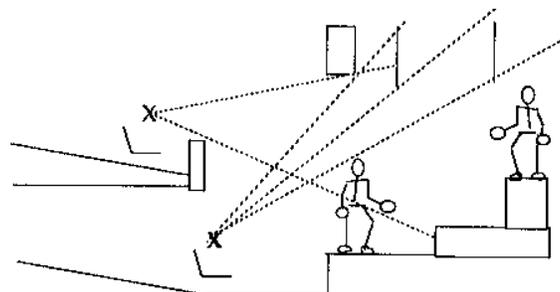


Illustration: Vertical Sightlines

⁶⁶ Warren C. Lounsbury, Norman Boulanger. *Theatre Backstage From A to Z*. University of Washington Press, 3rd Ed.

The finished ground plan

Your finished ground plan must be detailed and accurate and include all the visual information an overhead diagram can convey. Neatness, completeness, and clarity are a must and will be graded.

Include on the ground plan the following details:

- The inclusion of center and setting lines.
- The use of labels where information cannot be conveyed visually.
- The indication of levels, including written heights.
- The title block (an information box), which includes the information as shown below.

<p>PLAY TITLE Play Author</p> <p>Director: Designer:</p> <p>Theatre/facility Dates of Production:</p> <p>SCALE: 1/2" = 1' -0"</p>
--

Title Block Information

<p>OEDIPUS REX Sophocles</p> <p>Director: George Spelvin Designer: Alan Smithe</p> <p>SOTA DRAMA STUDIO JUNE, 2004</p> <p>SCALE: 1/2" = 1' -0"</p>

Title Block Sample

ASSIGNMENT: THE FRONT ELEVATION

Instructions

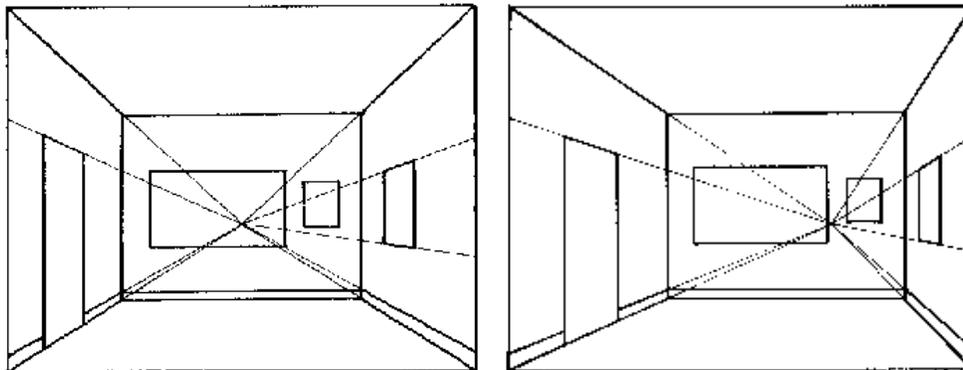
Draw the front elevation, or perspective drawing, of the ground plan you just completed in the last assignment. The **WORKSHEET: DRAW A FRONT ELEVATION** (in **ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages** ). The drawing of the proscenium arch is also in 1/4" = 1'-0" scale, as was the floor plan.

The method explained in this chapter to draw a front elevation sketch from your ground plan is quick and easy. But first, a short explanation about perspective.

A Short Guide to Perspective

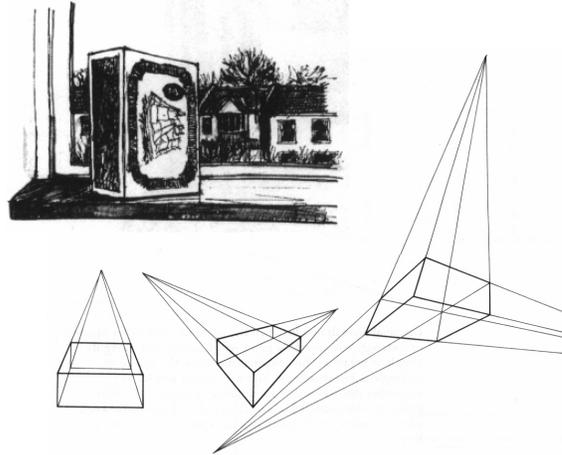
You can be an artist without knowing anything about perspective. Five hundred years ago, when some of the great masterpieces of all time were painting, the word did not even exist. But most beginners want to know something about it in order to make their drawings appear three-dimensional, so here is a short guide.

- The further away an object is the smaller it seems.
- All parallel horizontal lines directly opposite you, at right-angles to your line of vision, remain parallel.
- All horizontal lines that are in fact parallel but go away from you will appear to converge at eye-level at the same vanishing point on the horizon. Lines that are above your eye-level will seem to run downwards towards the vanishing point; lines that are below your eye-level will run upwards. You can check the angles of these lines against a pencil held horizontally at eye-level.



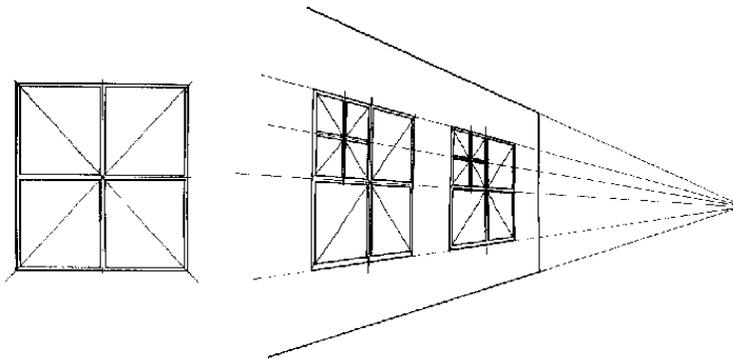
- The larger and closer any object is, the bigger the front of it will seem to be in relation to the part furthest away, or to any other more distant object. Its actual shape will appear foreshortened or distorted. Look at the illustration below, in it a matchbox close to you will appear larger and more

distorted than a distant house. If you are drawing a building seen at an angle through a window, the window frame will be larger and more distorted than the building.



Illustrations: One vanishing point (left), Two vanishing point (center), Three vanishing point (right)

- If the side of an object is facing you, one vanishing point is enough, but if the corner is facing you, two vanishing points will be needed.
- It may even be necessary to use three vanishing points when your eye is well above or below an object, but these occasions are rare.
- You can check the correct apparent depth of any receding plane by using a pencil or ruler held at eye-level and measuring the proportions on it with your thumb. If you use a ruler you can actually read off the various proportions.
- One point to mention again: all receding parallel lines have the same vanishing point (Illustration below right). So when you draw a room this will apply to all the horizontal edges— ceiling, doors, windows, floor level.



Can you take a joke?

Question: How many writers does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: It doesn't need changing.

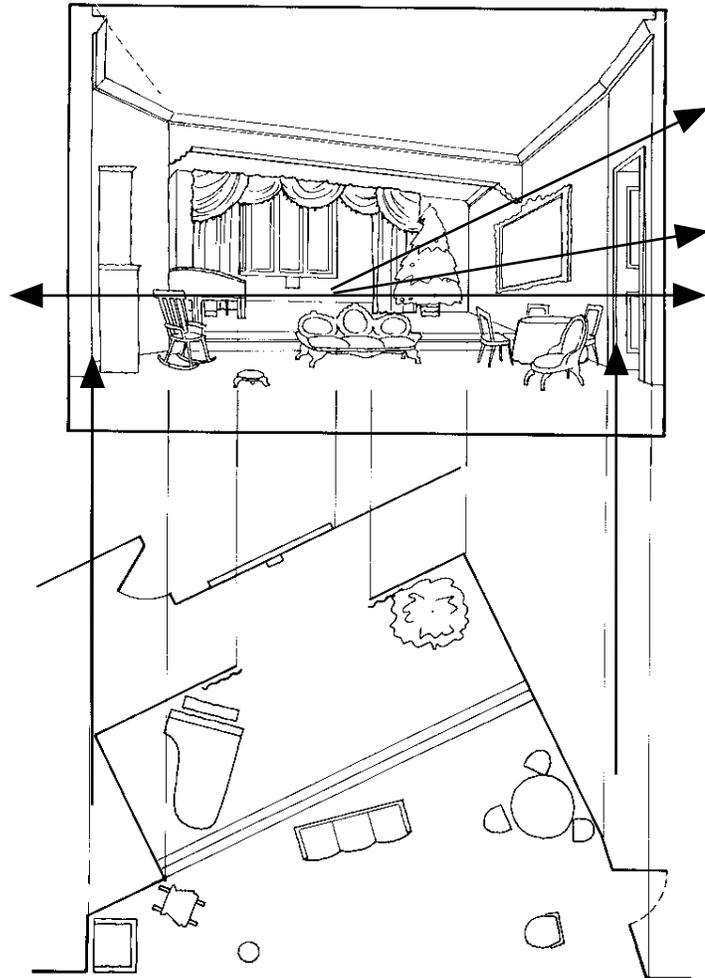


Illustration: Transferring the Ground Plan to the Elevation. Ground Plan (below), Elevation (above)

Transferring the Ground Plan to the Elevation

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- Step one: Center your ground plan directly below your elevation drawing (as shown on the Illustration above.)
- • Step two: With a straight edge and an angle, transfer the position of the important points— the edges of walls, windows, doors, and the corners of furniture and so on— from the ground plan to the elevation. Draw vertical lines on the elevation to indicate these points. Remember all points on the ground plan that are vertical lines on the elevation transfer as straight lines. On the Illustration above see the double-ended arrows indicating the edges of the outside walls.
- Step three: Select a horizon line, usually at eye level. These are illustrated as a horizontal line with arrows on both ends on the top Illustration: Elevation. You can work to a central vanishing point on this line (shown as lines that *end* with arrows on Illustration: Elevation).

⁶⁷ based on material by W. Oren Parker and Harvey K. Smith, *Scene Design and Stage Lighting*, 3rd Edition.

ASSIGNMENT: THE SET MODEL

Introduction

Building a simple set model of your play, scene, or monologue will give you as a student-actor and/or director a better understanding of the three dimensional nature of the theatre, and how scale, proportion, proximity, and levels influence your work. It will help you see in a smaller scale that which will eventually be presented in full scale on stage and how all theatrical design is about “the human scale” on stage.

Time devoted to making a model is time invariably well spent. With a three-dimensional reference, it is far easier to discuss the set and to spot any potential problems or weak aspects. Don't be frightened about adjusting your design while building your model. Use modeling as a thinking process. Try to respond to what you see. Often, a good visual idea will emerge in the process of building, or by accident, and you must be able to use it.

Basic Tool Kit

Building a simple set model does not involve a major monetary commitment on materials and equipment. The basic requirements are listed here.

Basic Equipment

A drawing or soft-wood cutting board (see the illustration below).

These come in various sizes from 12" x 17" to 36" x 48". I use a drafting board on which I draw using one side, and cut materials for model building on the reverse side. A kitchen cutting board can also be used, but don't forget to ask first.

A scale ruler (sometimes called an Architect scale) with 1/2" and 1/4" scales.

A metal straight edge for cutting against (at least 18" long, 24" is better.)

A X-Acto Knife (a sharp modeling knife with No. 11 blade)

A #2 pencil

A pair of good paper-cutting scissors

A hot glue gun and glue sticks

Materials (the first two are necessary)

Crescent Mat Board

It has a colored surface paper that may be smooth or textured. The most common thickness used is 4 ply (around 1/16"). It comes in many sizes, although 20" x 32" and 32" x 40" are the most common. It also comes in many textures and colors, although it's usually found in solid white (whitecore). For model building white and black mat board will do. Blackcore matboard is excellent for model building: as the name says, it is black in the core and on the outside.

Foamcore Board (good for your model base)

What is Foamcore Board or Foam Board? It is a sheet of foam with paper laminated front and back. It's light, rigid, easy to cut and relatively cheap. It usually is available in solid white and in black with white foam core. Black foam board is best for model building. Foam board comes in many sizes from 8" x 10" to 40" x 60", although 32" x 40" is the most common size, and it comes in thickness from 1/8" to 1", although the most common and usable is 3/16".

Illustration Board & Cold Press Illustration Board

Poster board

Graph paper

Card stock

File folders (can be used as inexpensive card stock)

You may also want

Rubber cement

Adhesive tape

A stapler

Thumb tacks and push pins

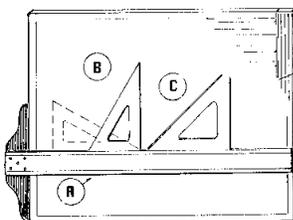
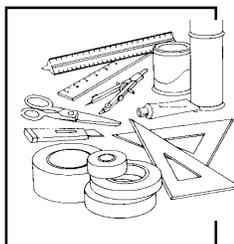
A set of colored pencils

Felt tip pens

A pencil compass

A T square (A)

Two Triangles - 30°-60° (B) and 45° (C)



Illustrated: Drawing or drafting board with a T square (A), and Triangles: a 30°-60° (B) and a 45° (C)

STEP 1: BUILDING A MODEL OF A STAGE

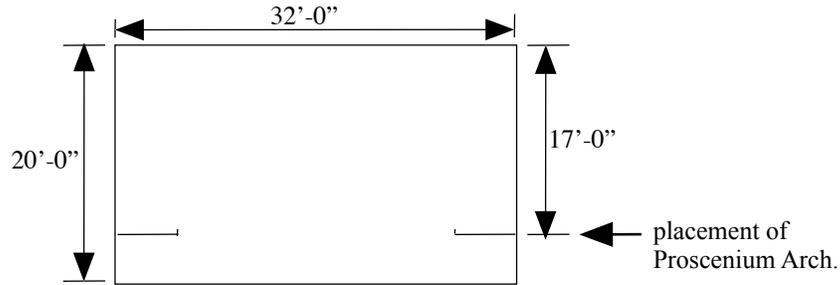
Instructions

Before you start building the model of the set you designed, you have to build a stage to put it on. Build a stage house— with a stage floor and proscenium arch— following one of the two methods illustrated in this section. Make sure you stay “in scale” at $1/2" = 1'-0"$. Use the the dimensions (measurements) below to create your model. There is a rule used by all carpenters and theatre set builders: “measure twice and cut once.”

METHOD ONE

STEP ONE: THE STAGE FLOOR WITH APRON⁶⁸ (a base for the set):

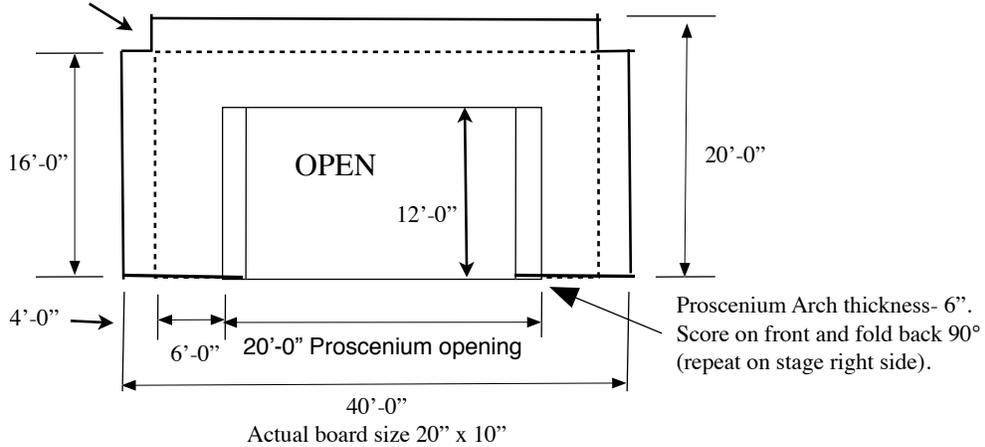
- Use 3/16" foam core board— black is better than white. (32"x40" sheet)
- Dimensions: 32'-0" (wide) x 20'-0" (deep) at $1/2" = 1'-0"$ scale. (Actual foam core board is 16" x 10".) Apron dimensions: 3'-0" (Proscenium arch back from front apron)



STEP TWO: PROSCENIUM ARCH:

- Use mat board, black is better than white. (32"x40" sheet)
- Outside dimensions: 40'-0" (wide) x 20'-0" (high)
- Proscenium Opening dimensions: 20'-0" (wide) x 12'-0" (high) Proscenium thickness dimension: 0'-6" (wide)

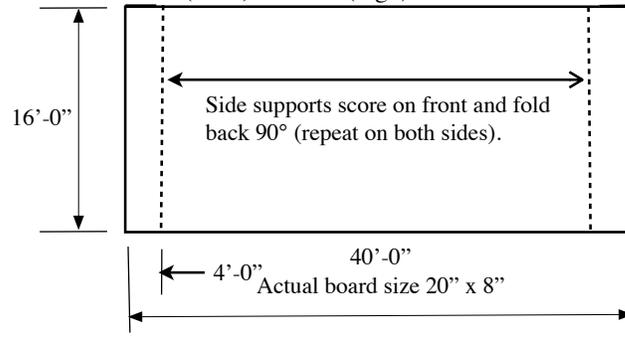
Side & Top supports score on front and fold back 90° (repeat on both sides).



⁶⁸ A stage floor is also called “a deck” (another theatrical word with its origins in the ship building trade.)

STEP THREE: BACK WALL or cyclorama

- Outside dimensions: 40'-0" (wide) x 16'-0" (high).



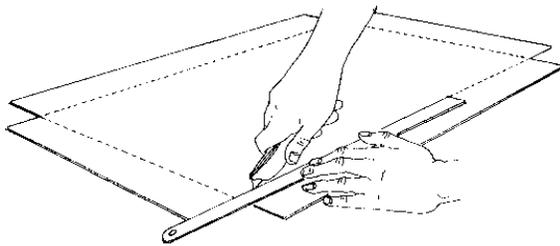
Remember

- The card bends away from the scored side.
- Cut against a straight STEEL edge, not your scale ruler.
- Use a wooden cutting board to preserve your blades and protect the table top.
- Keep your fingers safely behind the blade when cutting.

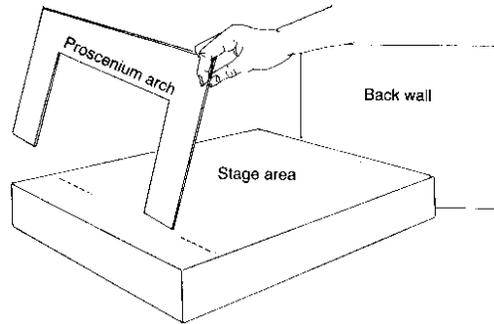


Example

Illustrations below are the steps needed in building a simple stage base to house the set model out of mat board.



Cutting and scoring the model stage's base.



Proscenium and back wall being fitted.

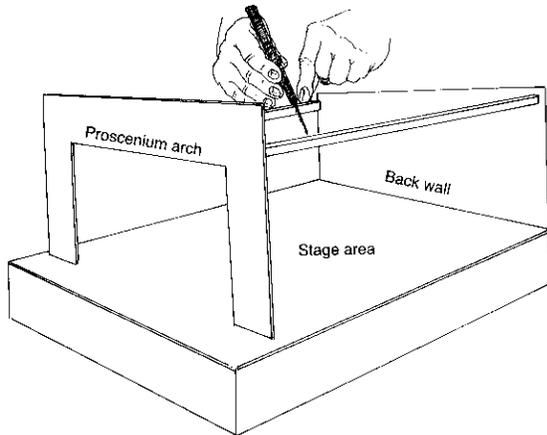
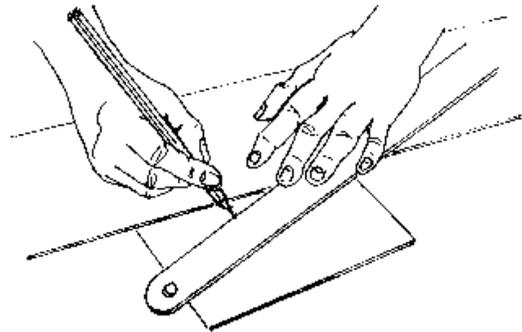


Illustration: Assembling the the simple stage house.



Cutting using a metal straight edge.

Model building techniques and samples

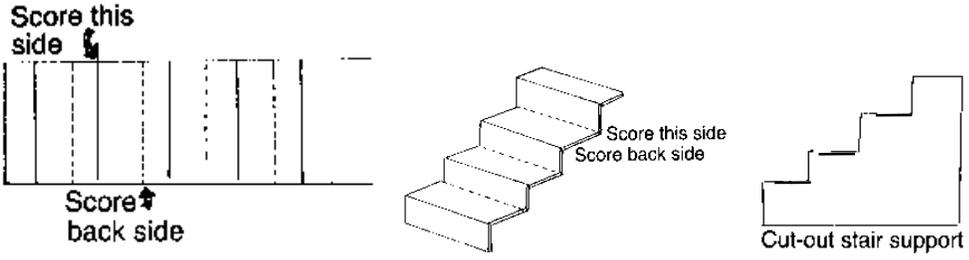
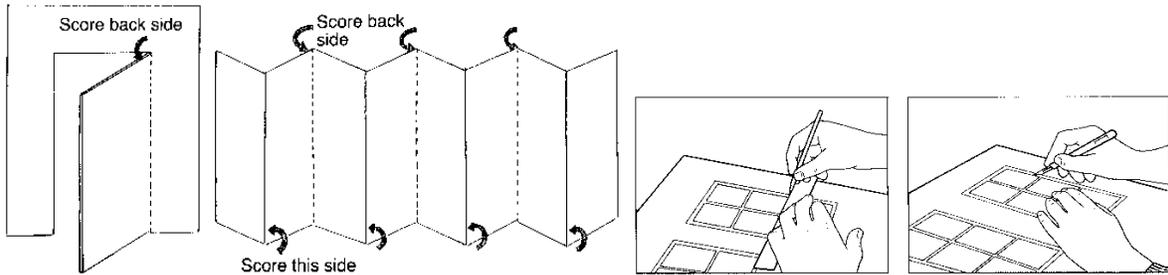
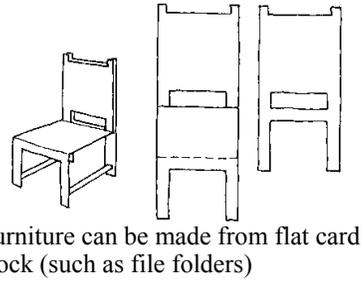
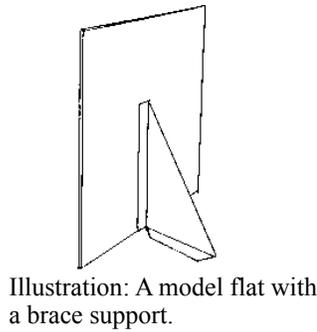


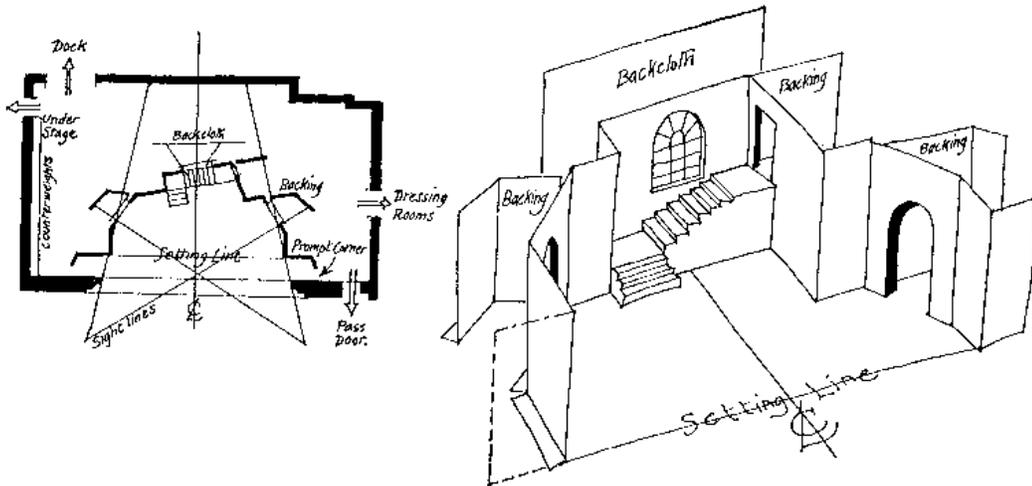
Illustration: Cutting and scoring card to make steps.



Illustrations: Cutting and scoring card to make door openings, walls, and windows.

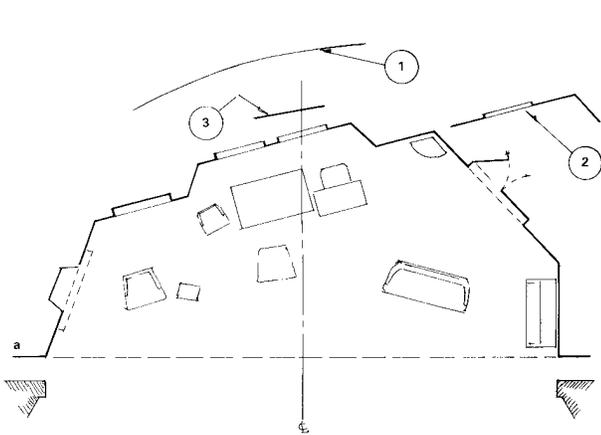


A simple and effective model can be made by drawing the basic elements of the set on card stock, then cut out the shapes and affix them in their correct positions (shown below). You can draw an entire room, its walls joined edge to edge, then fold them into position. Draw the doors and windows and cut out only what is needed. A door can be cut on two sides and scored (half cut through) on the hinged side and folded back.

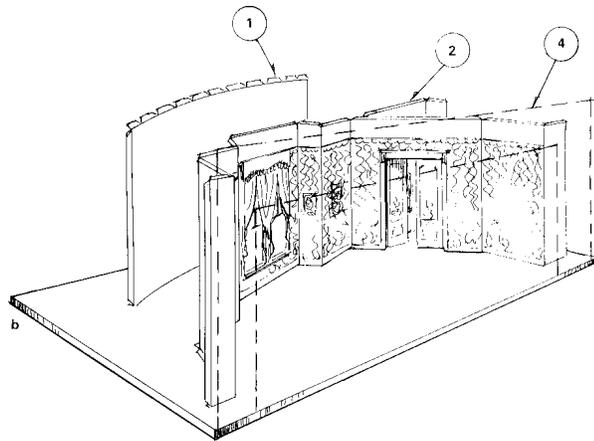


Illustrations (above): Ground Plan and cardboard model of conventional box set.

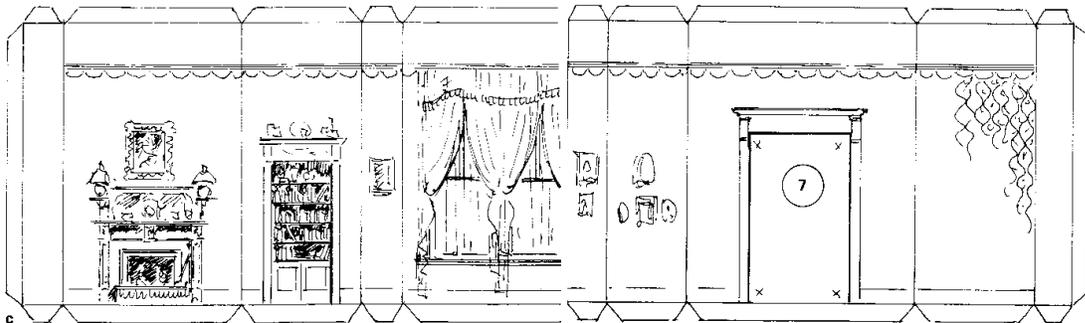
Illustrations (below): The steps in creating a SAMPLE MODEL



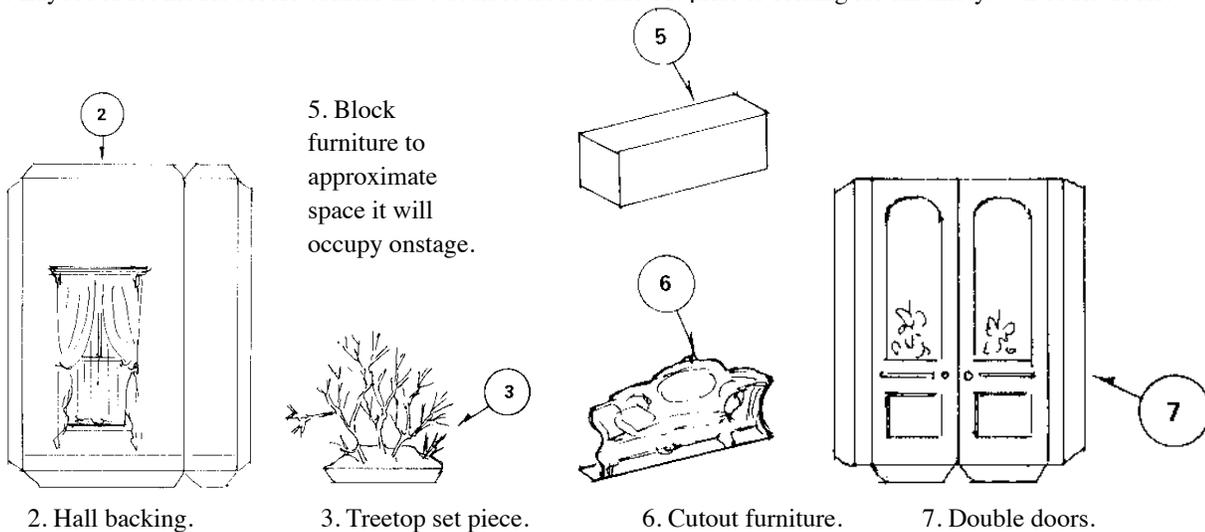
A: Plan for the model is the same as the ground plan for the stage setting at a smaller scale.
1. Sky backing. 2. Hall backing. 3. Treetop set piece.



B: Perspective view of the model. 1. Sky backing. 2. Hall backing. 4. Proscenium Arch placement.



C: Layout of set model before corners have been scored or tabs cut prior to folding for assembly. 7. Double doors.



2. Hall backing.

3. Treetop set piece.

6. Cutout furniture.

7. Double doors.

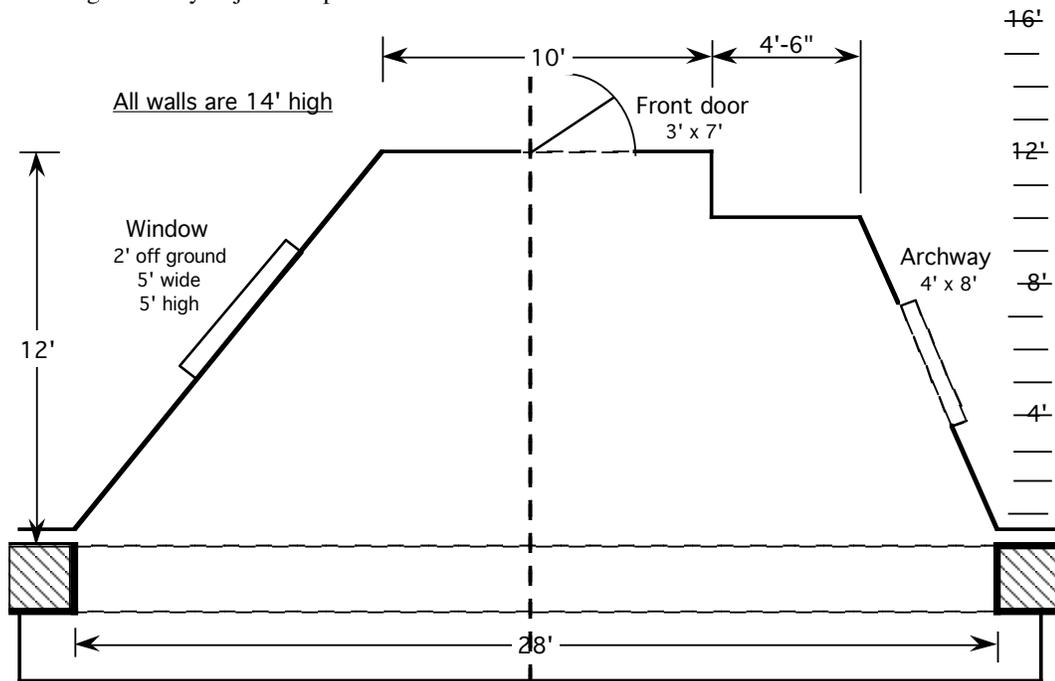
Getting fancy

If you used materials of many different types and textures on your model and want to create what is called “a white model” cover the entire model with Gesso. This will create a uniform surface. Gesso can also be used to create textures and build up surfaces on the model. For even heavier textures than possible with Gesso use acrylic Modeling Paste. Modeling Paste, unlike Gesso, must be applied with tools other than brushes. A popular brand of both Gesso and Modeling Paste is made by Liquitex and is available at most arts and crafts stores.

STEP 2: BUILDING A SIMPLE SET MODEL

Instructions

1. Build a set model out of card stock (file folders work perfectly well, although mat board works best) based on the information on the below ground plan.
2. Pick a wall covering (paint, wall paper) and a few simple architectural features.
3. Look at the instructions on how to build a set model and examples of model building as reference before you begin. Stay "in scale."
4. Make sure you have a human figure on your model to show scale and proportion. Place the set model on the stage model you just completed



Student Designer: _____
 Room Designed: Model Project



Ground Plan
 Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

STEP 3: YOUR SET MODEL

Instructions

1. The scene partners together will discuss, design, and build a preliminary model of the setting of their scene. Neatness, completeness, and clarity are a must and will be graded.
2. Show all major objects in the setting (furniture, windows, doors, walls, et cetera).
3. Decide on a wall covering (paint, wall paper) and a few simple architectural features.
4. Look at the instructions on how to build a set model and examples of model building shown as reference before you begin. Stay "in scale".
5. Make sure you have
 - A human figure on your model to show scale and proportion
 - A base (stage floor) for the set with apron
 - A proscenium arch
 - A title block as shown next

PLAY TITLE
Play Author

Director:
Designer:
Theatre/facility
Dates of Production:
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Title Block Information

OEDIPUS REX
Sophocles

Director: George Spelvin
Designer: Alan Smithe
SOTA DRAMA STUDIO
JUNE, 2004
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Title Block Sample

STEP 4: THE DESIGN PRESENTATION

Instructions

1. The scene partners will show the class their design concept and explain its elements (showing their thumb-nail sketches, the ground plan, elevation, and the model) in a lecture-demonstration. You are selling them your ideas. This is the same process used by designers when they present their designs to a director.
2. Be prepared to tell the class (in detail) about the style you choose, the what and where of all the objects in your setting. **BE SPECIFIC!**

Example

Over here, against this wall, which is painted white, but very dirty, is a very old dresser. Etc.

Sources for further study

- Holt, Michael. *Stage Design and Properties*. Schirmer Books (Theatre Manuals), 1989.
- Parker, W. Oren and R. Craig Wolf. *Scene Design and Stage Lighting*. (6th Ed.) Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990. *A classic text, the original authors being Parker and Smith.*
- Payne, Darwin Reid. *Theory and Craft of the Scenographic Model*. (Rev. Ed.) Southern Illinois University Press, 1985. (Revision of text: *Materials and Craft of the Scenic Model.*, 1976.) *Highly recommended as the one source needed to build models.*
- Pecktal, Lynn. *Designing and Painting for the Theatre*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975. *Beautifully illustrated with many color plates.*
- Philippi, Herbert. *Stagecraft and Scene Design*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953. *Out of print, but still a classic text.*

