Objective: Students will be exposed to the world of costume design and the elements of visual design. They will learn, understand, and be able to recognize what costume design is, how it is used to tell a story, and what the basic principles are in its execution.

Materials:
PowerPoint presentation
TV/board for powerpoint

Lesson:

We have talked a lot about acting and now we are launching into the unit that talk about everything that is not acting. It is important for the actor to understand that other aspects of bringing a character and story to life. The other roles are just as important and just as time consuming. You can’t always see those people who are behind all of that work so there are a lot of common misconceptions behind a lot of those designs. Costuming being one of them.

You know what a costume is. And you might even know what essentially a costume designer does. Its in the name! They design the costumes for production/movie etc. But what’s the big deal? It's just what the actors are wearing right?

Costumes tell a story
  • They show who a character is.
    • The costume designer must create the appearance of a character.
      • Ex. Think about the first things you typically notice about people. Their appearance. What are they wearing? And what does that say about them?
    • Costumes also include, hair, makeup, accessories. Everything you are looking at when you see a character, is a tribute to the costume designer.
    • There are no accidents or small choices. Costumers have to be careful about every choice they make. They do not want to “accidentally” portray the character as someone that they are not based off of what they are wearing.
      • Ex. Real life! Everyone chooses an outfit for themselves every morning. It accurately displays who you are whether you want it to or not. Because its you! If someone was making a movie about you and put your character in something totally different from what you
would wear in red life, the audience would get the wrong idea of who you are.

Example:
Show the class the next 2-3 slides of the powerpoint and ask them who they think the character is just based off of what they see and what they are wearing. Not who they are as in what their name is and what movie they be from, but who are they as a person? What is their story? Can you tell?

Ex 1: Cosette from Les Mis- poor, dirty, dark and drab colors, from a different time period, worker of some sort.
Ex 2: Wilbur Turnblad from Hairspray- bright colors, mismatched pattern lets us know he is funny and whimsical. The flower indicates that he may be a salesman. The jacket looks like it is not from this time period.

What we are doing is nothing new. We look at people and identify them based off of their appearance everyday. You probably even treat people differently by what they are wearing. A military outfit vs ripped jeans and a sweatshirt. The costume designers job is to recognize beforehand, what the audience is going to see and receive, and make sure that the character is portrayed accurately.

Elements of visual design
• All designers use these to some degree.
  • Color
    • Color can say a lot about a person’s personality/mood.
  • Texture
    • Different fabrics, layers
  • Line
    • Are there patterns? What are they?
  • Shape
    • What is the silhouette?
  • point
    • Does the costume have one focal point area? Or is nothing meant to stand out?
  • Form
    • Is the costume structured? Is it loose?
  • Space
    • How does the costume take up space in the room?

The big picture
• The costume designers start with the story as a whole and then work their way smaller.
• They read the script and get a feel for the world they are designing for. They must understand the world that the characters are living in before they design for the individual character or group of characters.
• Especially when doing a play the director may have their own concept for the show.
  • Ex: Shakespeare in a different time period (Midsummer set in a rave)

The next couple of slides are examples of how the costume designer effects the story/tells the story on the big picture scale.

• Tone/Style
  • Costumes can set the whole tone/style of the production/film. They have to work with the other designers to create a fantasy world. Sometimes that fantasy world is recreating some realistic. Sometimes its coming up with new concepts all together.
  • Ex: Hamilton. Hamilton is set in a specific time period. But the overall production concept was more modern because of the Rap, themes, etc. The designer took the more modern take on time period clothing.
    • won the Tony award for costume design.

• Time period
  • Costumes play a huge part in establishing the time period for a story. In pieces that happened in the past, they have to accurately display the characters in that historical time period. This puts the audience in the world of the play and doesn’t distract them from the story.
  • Remember that different time periods looked different depending on your location. Which brings us to the next slide, setting.

• Setting
  • Where does the story take place?
    • Country? Fashion changes when you are in different places.
    • Weather?
    • Formal or casual event?
      • Ex: Lion King- takes place in an African wild. All of the characters are then animals. Ties in the animals with the over all theme of African jungle.

The Characters
  The costume designer remember, starts with the script to learn absolutely everything that they can about the character, Remember the example if you were the character they were making the movie about? IF the costume designer could not physically see you, you would want them to find out everything they could about you to accurately portray you.
  • Gender
    • Ex. Billy Elliot and Wicked
  • Occupation
    • ex: Matilda
  • position/class
• Ex: Hunger Games
• Relationships
  • Ex. The divergent. Different classes of people in different colors and kinds of costumes.

The Black panther
• Oscar award winning costume design for this year. She talks about how she uses many of the elements of design to tell the over all story of the characters.

The Costume itself
• Costumes must be practical for the actors
  must be moveable and breathable
• Quick changes

Tour:
Take a tour of the costume to shop to give an overview of where the costumes are made, stored, etc.

Assignment:
Students will learn about the characters of Jim and Dwight from The Office. Most of the students have probably heard of them before. Show then 2 short video clips that display their personalities. The students will then do a short canvas assignments as follows:

After looking at the characters of Dwight and Jim from The Office, how is the costume designer telling a story? What do their costumes reveal about them? What elements of design are being used? Give at least 3 examples. Write at least 1 paragraph.

Extension:
Film/Televison vs Theatre costuming
• Ex: Show an example of a quick change on stage, this does not happen in film because of scene cuts etc.
• Film costuming has more of a goal of being realistic. Theatre’s goal is to make the realistic visible. Some things have to be over exaggerated