Master of Fine Arts
Costume Design & Production

Men on Boats (2021- 2022)

PROGRAM GOAL

To provide students with training in the art and practice of costume design and technology. The program is designed to prepare students for careers in the costume industry by teaching industry-leading practices, helping to balance skill proficiencies, developing each student as an individual artist.

Students graduate with an in-depth knowledge of all aspects of costume design, including classes in designing for various disciplines, costume history, and costume rendering courses in both traditional and digital media. Costume technology is a key component with classes in couture sewing, draping and patterning, millinery, fabric modification and costume crafts. Students will develop their wig and makeup design and technology abilities to create a wellrounded costume design portfolio. MFA Costume Design and Technology students get the opportunity to design and build costumes for productions in the School of Theatre, currently listed in Hollywood Reporter's Top 25 drama schools. A professional portfolio of beautifully executed design and technology work is required for graduation.

PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Costume Design ▪ Students following the Costume Design MFA concentration usually work as design assistants and design directing projects during their first year. The second-year students design a season subscription show and work as design assistants. The third-year student will continue in this trajectory with an MFA Creative Final Project (practical thesis) in designing for a season subscription show or other design project that suits the student's abilities and career goals. Most students will graduate with at least two realized productions in their portfolios.

Costume Technology ▪ Students following the Costume Technology MFA concentration usually work as first hands during their first year. In their second and third years, students will work as drapers on increasingly complex build projects for the School of Theatre season. In the third year, the work of a technology student culminates with a Creative Final Project (practical thesis), developed in partnership with their faculty mentor.

Teaching ▪ During their second and third year, students may be given the opportunity to teach undergraduate design and technology classes.

Assistantship (20 hours per week) ▪ Assistantship includes a tuition waiver for 60 hours over three years plus a stipend of approximately $18,000 for the year. Students must acquire in-state resident status by the end of their first year. Assistantship duties include working in the costume shop, supervising wardrobe crew, or teaching undergraduate costume classes.

PRODUCTIONS

Assistantship work includes various tasks on productions. Each student will be assigned to help build costumes to develop their costume skills. Duties may include shop organization, alterations, stitching, first hand work, pattern making, crafts, dyeing, millinery, wig styling, working wardrobe head, and other technical work. Production work is assigned with student success and career goals in mind.

MENTORSHIP

Florida State University's MFA Costume program is committed to hands-on mentorship. Faculty and staff work closely with graduate students in classes, during assistantship hours, and in production to ensure students are receiving constant feedback and opportunities for learning. All faculty and staff mentors are active professionals in their respective fields bringing industry best practices back to the costume shop and classrooms at the School of Theatre. MFA students may participate in conferences, industry trips (fabric shopping, rental pulling), and working professionally alongside their mentors as opportunity permits.

SEMESTER REVIEW

Each semester, faculty review students' progress regarding class work, production assignments and assistantship work. The review includes portfolio development and review of current resume. Students need to pass this each semester to continue in the program. A failure of this qualifying exam or a student earning a GPA below the graduate school minimum results in probation. Students who do not satisfy the conditions of their probation may be dismissed from the MFA program.

SCHOOL OF THEATRE PRODUCTION SEASON

The season includes five subscripton shows that are fully produced each season, including classical and contemporary plays, a children's show, and two musicals. Previous shows include *9 to 5: the Musical*, *Something Rotten!*, *In the Heights*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Bulrusher*, *Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat*, *Men on Boats*, and *Eurydice*. Unsupported work includes MFA Director One-Acts and devised theatre projects.

Something Rotten! (2022-2023)

The School of Theatre
AT FLORIDA STATE

COURSES

Costume Design ▪ Design classes engage with a wide range of material, asking students to design costumes for various periods and styles of theatre, dance, opera and entertainment. Discussions of best practices in design include collaborative thinking, script analysis, research techniques, fabric knowledge, oral and visual communication skills, costume paperwork, fittng protocols, and dress rehearsals.

Rendering ▪ Rendering classes cover both traditional and digital techniques with the overall goal of strengthening drawing skills, promoting creativity, understanding fabric, and improving designer communication. Traditional and digital rendering techniques include explorations of using or emulating various media, analysis of different rendering styles, and analysis of research. Digital rendering explores various software including Adobe Photoshop and Procreate.

Costume History ▪ The Costume History Seminar is a lecture course exploring the history of human adornment starting in Neolithic periods and moving through influential Western and non-Western cultures to the year 2000 CE. MFA students conduct and collate their own costume research to broaden the reach of the class.

Technology ▪ Classes in costume technology cover a wide range from couture sewing, flat patterning, draping, historic period draping, millinery, crafts, fabric modification, tailoring, corsets and crinolines, wigs, management, etc.

Wigs and Make-up ▪ Techniques taught include wig and facial hair construction focusing on hair texture, types, and color, foundation building, ventilating, historical and conceptual design research, and styling. Moreover, traditional stage makeup application emphasizing color theory, skin types and tones, historical influence, and design-based thinking.

COSTUME SHOP EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Sewing / Patterning Room ▪ Industrial and Domestic machines; including a Bernina embroidery machine, several large cutting tables, and dress forms in various sizes/styles.

Dye and Craft Room ▪ Specialty equipment including textile digital printer, fabric steamer, and industrial dye vat, as well as all appropriate safety equipment.

Costume Storage ▪ Over 3250 sq. feet of on-site costume storage.

Laundry Room, Wig Room, and Dressing Rooms

Dragons Love Tacos (2022-2023)

APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

The following criteria must be met for consideration of acceptance into the program:

1. A Bachelor's Degree in Theatre from an accredited college or university. Students who do not hold a Theatre degree must show evidence of substantial coursework and/or experience in theatre to indicate probability of achieving success in advanced theatre studies.

2. A grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) during the last two years of study for a bachelor's degree, or 3.0 on a master's degree from an accredited institution; OR have acceptable scores on the verbal and quantitative portions of the Graduate Record Examination taken within the last 5 years.

3. All applicants must participate in an interview and portfolio review session, which may be at USITT Connect, URTA, or USITT. An on-campus interview is required for all domestic applications and strongly encouraged for inernational applicants.

4. Applicants must submit a completed School of Theatre application, three current letters of recommendation, current resume, and a statement of purpose.

5. Specific approval of the program director within the School of Theatre.

For admission procedures, contact the Office of Academic and Student Services at 850.644.7234.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Jacki Armit (she/her/hers)
Associate Professor of Costume Technology
Co-Director, the MFA Costume Design Program

Jen Gillette (she/her/hers)
Associate Professor of Costume Design
Co-Director, the MFA Costume Design Program

Sarah Jahnke (she/her/hers)
Costume Studio Manager

Madison Weber (she/her/hers)
Wig and Make-up Specialist

CONTACT INFORMATION

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The School of Theatre at Florida State

For additional information about the program, the faculty, and how to apply, please visit: theatre.fsu.edu/graduate