

# FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY—MFA COSTUME DESIGN

## MAJOR PROGRAM EMPHASIS: **COSTUME DESIGN COURSES**

- Costume Design Classes:
  - Theatre, opera, dance and film projects and design considerations when designing for each of these performance areas
  - Business side of costume design
  - Research of notable professional costume designers
  - Textile lectures on fibers and fabrics
- Historic Costume Seminar:
  - Lectures costumes through the various periods
  - Research sessions and information on scholarly costume history texts and websites
  - Research for actual vintage garments
  - Scholarly presentations of costume history research
- Rendering Classes:
  - Figure and garment drawing
  - Exploring various rendering media such as watercolor, color pencil, pastel, marker, etc.
  - Costume rendering workshop which explores various rendering styles
- Computer Rendering Class:
  - Techniques using Corel Painter and Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator software
  - Embroidery designing using Corel Draw and Bernina Software 8
  - Designing repeat textile print to be use on the FSU digital textile
  - Basic vector to design for the University Laser Cutter

## STRONG SECONDARY EMPHASIS: **COSTUME TECHNOLOGY COURSES**

- Patterning and Draping: the basic drafts to advance period draping
- Costume Crafts: thermoplastic, leather techniques, mold making and casting, jewelry techniques, mask making, foam pod body techniques, vacuum forming, etc.
- Fabric Modification: Information of the various dye types, color matching, shibori, devoré and discharge techniques, distressing techniques, silkscreen and block print techniques, airbrush and stencil techniques, etc. and the use of our digital textile printing machine
- Millinery: Soft construction, buckram construction, felt blocking, wire frame techniques, straw braid techniques, millinery trim
- Wig Design: Wig care and period styling, ventilating lace front wigs and facial hair, research into period hair and makeup

### Theatre Studies Course:

- Dramaturgy

### Electives—Courses:

- Geared to student's needs: couture sewing, tailoring, electrical wearable techniques, further museum costume research studies
- Design or costume tech practicum for work on FSU productions

## MFA CREATIVE FINAL PROJECT (THESIS) and DEFENSE

- Third Year—design of a major season subscription production and portfolio of the three years of graduate work

## SUBSCRIPTION SEASON

- Modern plays, TYA—Theatre for Young Audiences (children's play), musicals, classical theatrical and devised work
- Last season's plays: *Chicago*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, *In the Heights*, *We are Proud to Present*, and *New Horizons Play Festival*
  - *New Horizons Play Festival* (One-Acts, Shakespeare Short Cuts or Devised Work) is designed by First Year Costume Grads

## THEATRE SPACES

- Mainstage—Subscription productions on our 500-seat proscenium stage
- Lab Theatre—Subscription productions in our more intimate 150-seat black box space
- Studio Theatre—Act II productions in the smaller 250-seat proscenium stage

## COSTUME BUDGETS

- Costume budgets for subscription productions ranges from \$800 to \$4,000
- Non-subscription season with smaller scale productions cover the cost of dry cleaning. These include the Act II season (4 plays), Shakespeare Short Cuts, Devised Works and the Social Issues Projects

## DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES WITHING THE SCHOOL OF THEATRE

- Students usually design 2 to 3 subscription shows and several non-subscription shows while at FSU

## OTHER DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Students have occasionally designed costumes for the FSU dance department, opera department and film school

## COSTUME SHOP PERSONNEL

- Faculty Costume Technologist—Jacki Armit, who teaches the costume construction and patterning courses and also patterns and oversees patterning and construction on costumes for the productions [jarmit@fsu.edu](mailto:jarmit@fsu.edu)
- Full time costume shop manager and a full time draper/assistant manager
- Over-hire during larger production periods
- Seven to Nine costume design graduates
- BA costume students and work study students

## COSTUME SHOP FACILITIES

- The equipment includes
  - ♦ Main Shop: Numerous sewing machines and sergers, both domestic (Bernina) and industrials plus a Bernina embroidery machine and a blind hemmer, etc.
  - ♦ Crafts Room: Leather patch machine, dye vat, stove, [digital textile printer](#) and steamer, industrial clothes dryer, exhaust vent, laundry sink, hat blocks and streamer, etc.
  - ♦ Laundry Room: Washers and dryer
  - ♦ Stock Rooms: Good size and generally well maintained organized and maintained
  - ♦ Wig Rooms: Includes a wig drying cabinet
  - ♦ Large Dressing Rooms

## OUTSIDE OPPORTUNITIES

- Occasionally internships at suitable regional theatres may also be arranged for internship credit
  - ♦ Students have also interned in New York City working as design assistants and in the various costume shops
  - ♦ This usually happens either during the summer or part of a semester during the third year; (but mostly during summer)
- London Theatre Experience: Study in London [during a summer](#)
  - ♦ Usually involves independent research at museums such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Museum of Costume in Bath, England, London Museum, etc.
    - While in England students have an opportunity to see great theatre
    - However, the cost of this is **not** covered by FSU
- FSU Clothing and Textiles Department has a fine vintage and antique clothing collection from which students often view and do research

## TALLAHASSEE

- Capital of Florida—city of 250,000+ population
- Located just a short distance from the Georgia border in the Big Bend area of Florida near the Gulf Coast

## LOCAL SHOPPING

- Local shopping for garments include most retail chains Fabric Stores: Upholstery stores and Jo-Ann's Fabric store, Walmart and Hobby Lobby

## REGIONAL SHOPPING

- Fabric shopping trips to Jacksonville, Atlanta and occasionally to North Carolina

## INTERNET AND NYC

- Fabrics are also purchased through the Internet: Thai Silks, Ruppert, Gibbon and Spider, Gracie Woolens, Mood, Spandex House, B & J, etc.
- There are alums in NYC that will swatch for us as well
- We always strive to use the best quality goods available in accordance with the budget

## BA COSTUME STUDENTS

- A few classes have both undergrads and grads enrolled but most of the classes are strictly for the costume grad students
- In one class, Costume History, both grads and undergrads meet during the lecture sessions. Then the grads meet in an hour seminar venue once a week to get more detailed information
- Occasionally undergraduate costume students are allowed to take the Advance Costume Rendering or Patterning class. All the other classes are separate
- Interaction does happen in the costume shop working on productions. Both undergrads and grads do get to know each other and often an undergraduate will be assigned to assist a grad costume designer on a production

## COSTUME DESIGN ALUMNI

- Currently work in NYC in various costume shops, assist designers in NYC, design regionally, showcase productions in NYC and off-Broadway, assist on television series (Chicago PD) and major feature films, manage costume shops at regional theatres (La Jolla), work as faculty at universities, assistant designer at Disney Creative Entertainment, drapers, costume crafts artisans, etc.

## APPLYING TO THE MFA COSTUME DESIGN PROGRAM

- First, to be offered an assistantship, you need to respond by email of your interest in the program to me [cmuscha@fsu.edu](mailto:cmuscha@fsu.edu)
- Next, please start your **application on-line before February 1<sup>st</sup>**
- The FSU University Graduate application can be added as soon as possible or after you have been offered an assistantship if you choose. That way you don't have to pay a fee if you will not be offered an assistantship
- Both of these applications should be on the FSU web site:  
<http://www.theatre.fsu.edu/pages/graduate/application.html>
- Applicants are advised to visit the FSU Web Page at <http://theatre.fsu.edu/>
- **Assistantship Offers begin in Mid-February!**

## NUMBER OF ASSISTANTSHIP OFFERED EACH YEAR

- Three (3) assistantships are offered every year
- Assistantship covers both in and out-of-state full tuition waiver and a stipend of **\$15,600.** for the academic year
- Students usually work in the costume shop for an average of 20 hours a week for their assistantship (Depends upon your skill level—stitcher, first hand, draper, wardrobe supervisor on a show, stock maintenance, etc.) More hours will occur during tech week through dress rehearsals. There are Saturday work calls the day before first dress.
- During the second and third years, there are opportunities to teach an entry level undergraduate costume class such as: Costume Tech Practices, Costuming I, Stage Makeup, Introduction to Theatrical Design, etc.

CHECK LIST FOR ADMISSION INCLUDES:

- Current Resume
- University Graduate application <http://admissions.fsu.edu/> (includes a fee)
- School of Theatre application <http://theatre.fsu.edu/programs/graduate/costume-design/> (no fee with this one)
- Interview at U/RTA, LINK, SETC, USITT, or at FSU
  - ♦ Portfolio Review—including swatched renderings from at least two to three productions, one of which was realized; photos of realized designs; and actual examples or photos showing any costume construction skills
  - ♦ Additional artwork may be included, such as life drawings, watercolors, fiber art, etc.
- GPA of 3.0 (If lower than a combined verbal and quantitative score of 1000 on the GRE)
- Three Letters of Recommendation sent to my attention at the School of Theatre
- Official Transcripts—current and final after graduation
- Statement of Purpose—one page maximum

I also encourage prospective students to visit the campus and meet with the faculty and students. If you do decide to visit, please contact me so that a beneficial visit for you can be arranged

This is not necessary to visit, but many students find it very useful in making their decision. By the beginning of March, most of the offers will be out and probably accepted, so do not wait to get your application in and visit campus, if you truly are interested in the program.

If you have any questions, feel free to call or email me. You may also email a few of the current costume graduate students to get a student point of view of the program, the faculty, Tallahassee (housing, etc.) and FSU (campus, fees, books, library, student fees, etc.)

David Baxter	<a href="mailto:djb18br@my.fsu.edu">djb18br@my.fsu.edu</a>	Third Year Grad
Meredith LaBounty	<a href="mailto:ml18v@my.fsu.edu">ml18v@my.fsu.edu</a>	Third Year Grad
Hayley O'Brien	<a href="mailto:hto15@my.fsu.edu">hto15@my.fsu.edu</a>	Third Year Grad

They can also be reached most afternoons in the FSU Costume shop at (850) 644-6758.

Or email the costume shop manager, who is an alum of the program: Sarah Jahnke  
[smjahnke@fsu.edu](mailto:smjahnke@fsu.edu)

Again, it was great to meet with you. If you have any other questions, please feel free to email me.

Sincerely,



Colleen Muscha  
Professor and Director of the MFA Costume Design Program  
Florida State University School of Theatre  
(850) 671-4408 Cell  
[cmuscha@fsu.edu](mailto:cmuscha@fsu.edu)