

# USC School of Dramatic Arts



Achim Freyer  
Installation Ace Gallery

**THTR 132a**  
**Fall 2019**

**The Art of Theatrical Design**  
**Monday 10-11:50am**

**Location:** KAP 164

**Instructor:** Sibyl Wickersheimer

**Office:** JEF 200

**Office Hours:** weekly Mon12-1/Tu 11-12, & by appt  
You must make an appointment!

**Contact Info:** <mailto:sawicker@usc.edu>

## Course Description and Overview

A guided student exploration of the fundamentals of applied design elements and their use as creative tools in the design process.

## Learning Objectives

To promote the development of the artistic process and theatrical design vocabulary of the individual within the environment of collaborative storytelling. Group discussions, collaborations, and hands-on projects will be important elements of the class while simultaneously creating a foundation for long term development of the students' own artistic process. Emphasis will be placed on interdisciplinary and multimedia approaches to research, design, storytelling, interactive installation and performance.

## Class Meeting information

Assignments and Sketchbook assignments are to be completed prior to your arrival in class.

Turn off cell phones during all class sessions and put them on desk at front of classroom.

If your phone rings or is used during class, you may be excused for the remainder of the class period.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

### Texts:

#### Purchase:

*The Creative Habit*, Twyla Tharp

*A Director Prepares*, Anne Bogart

Theatrical Design & Production, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. by J. Michael Gillette (PURCHASED FOR 130 & 131)

#### View selections from the following texts on Blackboard:

*The Dramatic Imagination*, Robert Edmond Jones

*Bee Season*, Myla Goldberg

*365 plays & 100 Plays for the First 100 Days*, Suzan-Lori Parks

*The Collaborative Habit*, Twyla Tharp

**Additional Texts For Reference (both will be required in 132b and other BFA classes):**

Model Making: Materials & Methods by David Neat

Designer Drafting and Visualization, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Patricia Woodbridge

Unbalancing Acts, Richard Foreman

**Film References:**

Robert Irwin, *The Beauty of Questions*

From Start to Finish: De Wain Valentine's *Gray Column*

Gary Hustwit, *Objectified & Helvetica*

Terry Gilliam, *Brazil*

Ridley Scott, *Bladerunner*

Wim Wender, *Pina*

Julie Taymor, *Titus*

Susan Froemke, *Wagner's Dream*

PBS's series: *Art 21* ([William Kentridge: Anything is Possible](#))

[TateShots: Olafur Eliasson](#) 'Collective Experience'

**Supplies**

Digital camera

sketchbook - white paper – **no lines** – at least 8"x10" but can be larger

*Architectural* scale rule

25' or longer tape measure

metal, straight-edge ruler

Exacto knife and blades to fit size#11

Cutting matt – 18"x24" is best but 12"x18" is easier to transport

Glue stick, white glue & hot glue

Tape(various)

**Grading breakdown**

Assignments will be readings, quizzes, project based work, and written response papers. All projects and assignments will be graded using a point system. Reading assignments will be expected to be completed before the following class session after they are assigned; there will be quizzes on the readings. Written assignments and visual presentations are to be turned in physically, or uploaded as files to specific Google Drive & Blackboard folders, as specified by instructor. When turning in files, always create a compressed pdf file under 5MB in size. Please use the following naming format:

**LASTNAME \_132a\_PROJECTNAME\_DATE**

for example **WICKERSHEIMER\_132a\_METRO\_08292019.pdf**

**Assignment Submission Policy**

No late work (assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises) shall be accepted without penalty unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur. Assignment grades will be lowered automatically by at least one letter grade if they are not turned in by the assigned deadline. Attendance will affect the student's final participation grade because you cannot participate if you are not in class. If the student has more than 2 unexcused absences, overall grade may also be lowered by 10%.

**Grading Timeline**

Grading will be done 3-4 weeks at a time. While you may always inquire about your grade, please do not expect an immediate response after turning in assignments.

If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned when midterm grades are due. I am available to discuss your progress in class. **I encourage you to make an appointment to meet with me at least once during the semester.**

#### Assignment Grading Breakdown:

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Metro Assignment	50	5
Written Response	50	5
Storyboard Assignment	50	15
Sketchbook Assignments	120	15
Quizes (3)	90	15
Artist Presentation	50	15
Bee Season Group Project	100	15
Participation	30	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Grading Rubric

See attached guide used to determine the quality of work submitted for grading. Assignments may also have specific rubric details included in the instructor's written description of the assignment.

#### Grading Criteria

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

**A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

#### Course Calendar & Assignments (always subject to change)

WEEK 1 Aug. 26	<b>SEEING:</b> Active and passive discovery. Inspiration. Promoting discovery and invention. What is 'the artistic process'? What is in your tool kit?	In class: excerpts from Robert Irwin, <i>The Beauty of Questions</i> , Assignment: sketchbook #1 Read: Tharp, <i>The Creative Habit</i> p.1-45
Aug 29	<b>Reserve ticket for V&amp;V event – Sell/Buy/Date</b>	

WEEK 2 Sept. 2	<b>NO CLASS : LABOR DAY</b>	Read: Tharp, <i>The Creative Habit</i> p.45-90 Watch <u>PBS's Art 21: William Kentridge episode</u> Assign: Sketchbook #2, Metro Assignment
WEEK 3 Sept. 9	<b>WORK &amp; PROCESS</b> Organizing thoughts and ideas into concepts, themes, and relevant communication. Decision, selection, and the rigor of creative design. Exposing the artistic process. What's in your box and how is it organized?	In class exercise – orthographic sketches translated to Photoshop. Watch excerpts from Helvetica & Objectified. Due: Sketchbook Assignment #1 & 2 (due every week from now on) Read: <i>The Creative Habit</i> p.91-140 Assign: Metro (due week 4) & Sketchbook #3
Sept. 13	<b>Visions &amp; Voices Event</b> <b>Empower: Students, Art, &amp; Activism</b>	<b>10am-2pm</b> <b>Doheny Library, room 240</b>
WEEK 4 Sept. 16	<b>VISUAL STORYTELLING</b> Harvesting details as visual dramaturgy. Elements of Design. Digital Photography lecture/discussion and Photoshop demo.	DUE: Metro Assignment (turn in hard copy) Exerpt from <i>Pina</i> , and Lauenstein Brothers, <i>Balance</i> Read: Tharp, <i>The Creative Habit</i> p.141-180 Assignment: sketchbook #4
Sept. 13	<b>Visions &amp; Voices Event</b> <b>Reserve for Doug Aitken</b>	
WEEK 5 Sept. 23	<b>TEXT ANALYSIS FOR DESIGN:</b> Breaking down stories & text. Critical analysis and methods of research. Intro to Storyboarding	In class: Quiz on Creative Habit Assignment: Sketchbook #5, Read short play for Storyboarding Project Due wk7, & groups visit CAFAM and start research
Sept. 26	<b>Visions &amp; Voices event</b> <b><u>Sell/Buy/Date</u> a performance by Sara Jones</b>	<b>BING Theatre</b> <b>7pm</b> <b>Required to attend. RSVP for waitlist online.</b>
WEEK 6 Sept. 30	<b>VISUAL LITERACY</b> = Lifelong research. <b>FIELD TRIP(s) : The USC Fisher Museum of Art</b> Facing Survival: David Kassan <b>Visit to Architecture &amp; Fine Arts Library!!!</b>	Students meet at the museum at 10:00am for a tour. From there we will walk to the AFA Library for a visit. Assign: Sketchbook Assignment #6, Read Gillette Ch. ?
WEEK 7 Oct. 7	In class: Photoshop demo, basic layers, cutting/pasting <i>Watch Exerpts from Objectified and Helvetica</i> and Art 21 (if time allows...)	Due: 1 <sup>st</sup> pass Storyboards – groups turn in to Sibyl Assign: Sketchbook Assignment #7 Read: Bogart, <i>A Director Prepares</i> (Intro, Preface, <i>Violence</i> )

WEEK 8 Oct. 14	<b>COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> Scenarios for maximizing the strengths of the group. Brainstorming, listening, and processing. Good habits and best practices. In Class: Production Meeting Exercise Photoshop Sketching and Collage demonstration	Quiz on Bogart and Gillette reading Assign: Sketchbook Assignment #8
WEEK 9 Oct. 21	<b>DECONSTRUCTION AND ASSEMBLY</b> Exercises in communicating theatrical ideas with various media and layered images. Orthographic Drawings & Scale.	In Class: Scale exercises Complete Scaled Elevation, Plan, and Section drawings. Assign: Sketchbook Assignment #9, read Jones, <i>The Dramatic Imagination</i> , Ch. 2 Take home Quiz on Jones reading.
*****	<b>VISIONS &amp; VOICES EVENT:</b> <u>An Evening with Doug Aitken</u> <b>Wednesday, October 23 (reservations from Sept 18)</b> <b>7pm @ Bovard Auditorium</b>	<b>RSVP on Sept 18</b>
WEEK 10 Oct. 28	<b>METAPHOR/STYLIZATION AND VISUAL VOCABULARY</b> Parallel values & understandings. Historical and contemporary iconography and its relevance to theatrical design.	DUE: STORYBOARD Projects In class: watch Exerpts from: Gilliam, <i>Brazil</i> , Taymor, <i>Titus</i> , Discuss Intro to Collage Artist presentations Assign: Artist Choices & Presentations! Sketchbook Assignment #10
WEEK 11 Nov. 4	<b>CRITICISM &amp; CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE</b> Groups and class critique events. <b>PRESENTATION STRATEGY:</b> Verbal and visual articulation of design concepts. Choosing and preparing multi-media materials for a convincing and achievable design presentation.	Due: Artist choices, Sketchbook Assignment #11  Read excerpt from Myla Goldberg, <i>Bee Season</i> , and discuss Final Group Project work.
WEEK 12 Nov. 11	<b>Project group work starts</b> Artist Presentations Groups and class critique events.	Due: PRESENTATIONS <b>Next ½ of class – artist presentations!</b> Project groups assigned for Final Group Project
Nov 16 1pm	<b>Visions &amp; Voices Event</b> <b>The MET in HD: Giacomo Puccini's Madama Butterfly</b> Norris Cinema Theatre	<b>Lecture with Ken Cazan at 12pm</b>
WEEK 13 Nov. 18	Artist Presentations <b>Site Model Discussion – Continue Scale work</b>	<b>½ of class – artist presentations!</b> Due: Sketchbook Assignment #12

WEEK 14 Nov. 25	Work in Class in groups – Start Scale/Model layout Groups meet individually with teacher. Critique of prelim design presentation.	Due: Prelim Idea, research and sketches, Sketchbook Assignment #13
WEEK 15 Dec. 2	<b>Group Projects work day</b> Model building Demo	DUE : Scale/Model layout, Sketch books due
Dec. 16	<b>Monday, December 16, 8-10am</b> <b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>Group Projects Due</b> Present models and plans, & artist inspiration Assignment: Discuss Final projects

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

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### Support Systems:

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*  
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.  
[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

### **132a Assignments for Sketchbook/Image Library**

**All images must be outside of your living space.**

- 1     A)     Sketch a picture of a sign with only text visible (ex. STOP)  
      B)     On the opposing page of your sketchbook, paste an image you have found that visually communicates the meaning of the word WITHOUT TEXT  
      C)     Re-Design the sign to communicate the same instructions or advertisement in your own way. Metaphor and irony allowed.
- 2     Take photographs of a beautiful building from front and side view. Sketch the building from memory – both views. Look back at the photo and sketch one detail on the façade in a larger scale, blowing up the detail. Scan the sketches and use guidelines to layout the orthographic drawings in relationship to one another, as shown in class. Print on 8.5x11 paper in the Design Lab to include in your sketchbook.
- 3     Create a portrait inspired by a work of art you admire. Focus on using the same elements of Design that the original artist used to create their portrait.
- 4     Take 3 images, each one should clearly show different depth of field.
- 5     Sketch an object or art work you saw at CAFAM or on your way to/from the museum.
- 6     Find an image that tells a clear story through visual clues. What is that story?
- 7     Use Photoshop to adjust a photo that you took for contrast and saturation (separately). Place the original next to the 2 other adjusted images. Try to create a different visual mood than the original in the adjusted images.
- 8     Create your own image using 3 elements collaged to create a surreal landscape. Sketch out your idea in your sketchbook prior to creating the collage in Photoshop. Print the image in the Design Lab to include in your sketchbook.
- 9     Find, photograph, or draw two images that convey *movement* in different ways.
- 10    To show the impact of light and shadow, take 2 photos of the same architectural detail (place on opposing pages in sketchbook) in two different lighting situations. For example:
  - A)     during the day, in bright sunlight
  - B)     during morning or evening, dusk or dawn



- C) sketch the same detail using shading to convey shadow shapes
- 11 Find a simple small object. Draw 3 elevations of the object each in a different scale. Use 3 separate pages in your sketchbook. Draw a 4th sketch of the object, using a digital drawing program, ie. Photoshop.
  - 12 Take or create an image that visually conveys a SOUND.
  - 13 Create your own image assignment. Write your directive above the image.