

Imaginary Worlds: Behind the Scenes with Niagara University Theatre is a visual and tactile representation of the artistry of creating theatre. This exhibition offers the opportunity for viewers to appreciate the hands-on processes, experiences, and management of theatrical art; as well as a comprehensive presentation of the process of creating scenery, costumes, and lighting.

From concept to realization, visitors will engage with historical and contemporary materials that represent the collaborative efforts of directors, choreographers, designers, musicians, technicians, and performers from Niagara University Theatre Department's rich and vibrant 59-year legacy.

A Powerful Educational Experience

As one of the oldest professional theatre training programs in the region, Niagara University is well-known for preparing students for careers that take them anywhere from Broadway to Hollywood. One-on-one mentorship with theatre faculty gives increased confidence, both onstage and offstage, throughout every step of the experiential learning process.

Mentorship

Under the guidance of faculty and guest artists who are working professionals, all theatre students receive training in all aspects of theatre production such as the design and implementation of costumes, lighting, scenery, sound, and stage management. Design and Production students receive hands-on individualized opportunities in each of their four years to fulfill pivotal production roles.

Performance

Niagara University Theatre, the producing arm of the department, produces eight annual productions per season, allowing students an environment to apply the practical skills and knowledge they are learning in the classroom into a professional setting.

For season information and tickets to Niagara University Theatre's productions, please visit theatre.niagara.edu

For more information about Niagara University's Theatre Department and programs, please visit niagara.edu/theatre

Exhibited Artworks

All of the scenic elements, props, and costumes in this exhibition have been create by Niagara University Theatre Department students, staff, and faculty.

Acknowledgements

This exhibition was organized by the Faculty and Staff of the Niagara University Theatre Department and produced by the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, NY. Exhibition installation photography by Tito Ruiz, CAM Interim Marketing and Membership Manager. The opening reception on Thursday, February 23, 4:30 -7:00 p.m. is in conjunction with the *Measure for Measure* performance at 7:00 p.m. in Leary Theatre. For more information, please visit castellaniartmuseum.org.

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CASTELLANI
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OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY



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Please visit our website for current hours of operation.
The Castellani Art Museum is a free admission art museum.
Donations welcome.

Imaginary Worlds: *Behind the Scenes with Niagara University Theatre*

February 9 – August 13, 2023



Theatre
Program



Season
Brochure
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NIAGARA
UNIVERSITY
THEATRE

CASTELLANI
ART MUSEUM
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Imaginary Worlds provides a rare glimpse into the artistry and craftsmanship required to build worlds that, for a short time, reflect the human condition back to its observers. William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* explains to a group of actors that theatre's purpose is "to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." *Hamlet* suggests that what is seen onstage must mirror something of the world around us.

A playwright offers a story. The writer's imaginings, fashioned by directors and brought to life by designers, becomes an evening of entertainment, of diversion, of enlightenment, or education for an audience; perhaps eliciting questions, providing a springboard for conversation or debate, perhaps serving as a cautionary reminder or as a source of renewed optimism.

A theatre's pieces of physical art are typically on display for only the brief time a play or musical is available to an audience. Individually these pieces may, as in traditional examples of visual art, express beauty, emotional power, or a conceptual idea. These objects are specifically designed to work together, co-mingling with others to make a statement that supports the ideas the playwright has put forward.

Unlike many artists, the artisans who design and build costumes, construct sets and properties, conceive elaborate makeup effects, plan evocative lighting or haunting soundscapes do not work in solitude. They labor collectively to assemble a world where an audience can suspend its disbelief and fully engage in the lives of characters embodied by actors on the stage, and leave the theatre somehow changed.

Then, at the end of a production's run, those pieces of art are separated from each other and variously disassembled, stored away in darkness, or simply thrown away to make room. Having served their purpose, they become no longer immediately useful. The world they had created exists only in the memories of the participants. Thus is the ephemeral nature of theatre.

It is a rare opportunity to return some of these pieces to the light. As you explore the continuum of this exhibition, which reveals only a small portion of the artistry inherent in Niagara University Theatre productions, we encourage you to imagine—or perhaps remember—the larger world each piece inhabited. We invite you to contemplate how these artists offer a method for seeing our own world in the reflection of the one they've created.

Steven Braddock
Artistic Director, Niagara University Theatre



Image Credits: (clockwise from top left image) (1) Kari Drozd and Maureen Stevens, *She Loves Me* *Illona Dress and Overcoat*, 2017, Marilyn Deighton and Maureen Stevens, *Threepenny Opera* *Leather Tailcoat, Black Ascot, White Homberg Hat*, 2008, Marilyn Deighton and Maureen Stevens, *Curtains* *Plaid Silk Dress*, 2014; (2) David Dwyer, Ron Schwartz, and Primo Thomas Light Boxes, *Little Shop of Horrors*, 2018, Public Amenity No. 9 - *Urinetown*, 2012, Hot Box- *Guys and Dolls*, 2015, and *Chandelier, Rumors*, 2012; (3) *Peter and the Starcatcher* set and costume elements (David Dwyer, Primo Thomas, Lara Berich, Nicole DeLucia, Maureen Stevens), 2022; (4) David Dwyer, Various Set Models, 2011- 2021.

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- Lara Berich-Assistant Professor, Design & Production, Costume Shop Director
- Steven Braddock-Artistic Director, Niagara University Theatre
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- Jayson D. Clark-Adjunct Faculty, Design & Production
- Nicole DeLucia-Costume Shop Floor Supervisor
- Teodoro Dragonieri-Adjunct Faculty, Physical Theatre
- Kari Drozd-Costume Shop Floor Supervisor
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