

SECTION B: ***COSTUME DESIGN***



INDEPENDENT LEARNING TASK:
DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE DRAMATIC AIMS
OF THE RSC'S PRODUCTION OF THE TEMPEST (2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MML0EXW6s38&t=6s>

This clip goes behind the scenes to show some of the performance capture elements of the production through digitally creating the character of Ariel who is a magical spirit.

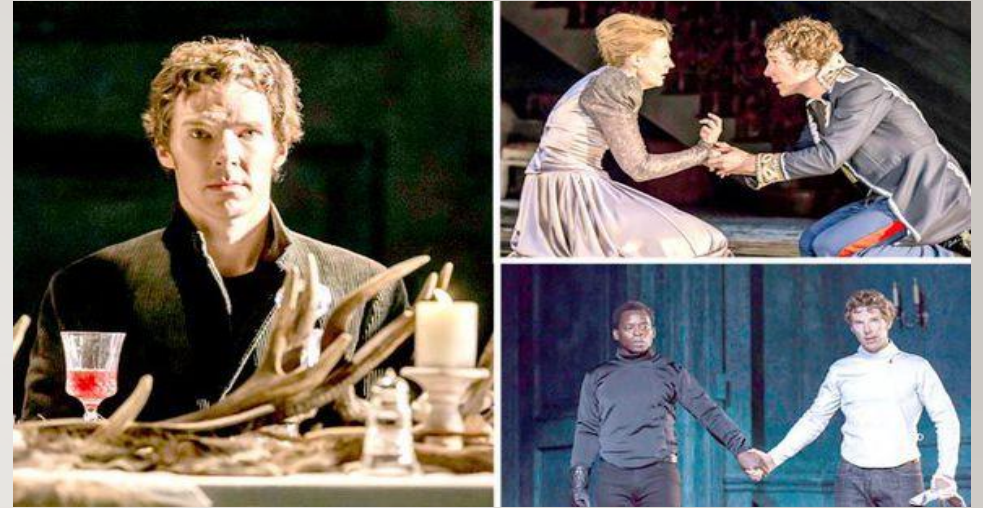
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bjrx0xIPMg>

In this second clip you can see the live performance of Act I, Scene 2 with both the performance capture and live performance from the actor playing Ariel.

LOOKING AT COSTUME

We will be using the following productions to look at costume:

- Hamlet by William Shakespeare, Directed by Lyndsey Turner
- Things I Know To Be True by Andrew Bovell, Directed by Geordie Brooks, with Movement Direction by Scott Graham (Creative Director of Frantic Assembly) – *we can already distinguish something about style here...*



COSTUME DESIGN – AN OVERVIEW

- Costume design is the **most personal aspect** of design. The costume designer must create clothes for characters that, on the one hand, reflect the ideas and aims of the production, but, on the other hand should look like the character chose the clothing in the same way you choose yours every day.
- Similarly, because we all wear clothes, audiences and actors will make strong, personal associations with what a character is wearing on stage.
- The costume designer's goals are like the set designer's goals. These goals can be broken into five categories: costumes should help establish **tone and style, time and place, and character information, and costumes should aid the performer and coordinate with the director's and other designers' concepts.**



COSTUME TERMINOLOGY

Costume Terminology

- Period
- Style
- Fit
- Cut
- Silhouette
- Condition
- Colour
- Fabric
- Texture
- Hemlines
- Necklines
- Waistlines
- Lapel width
- Trouser
- Skirt
- Dress
- Jacket Shapes

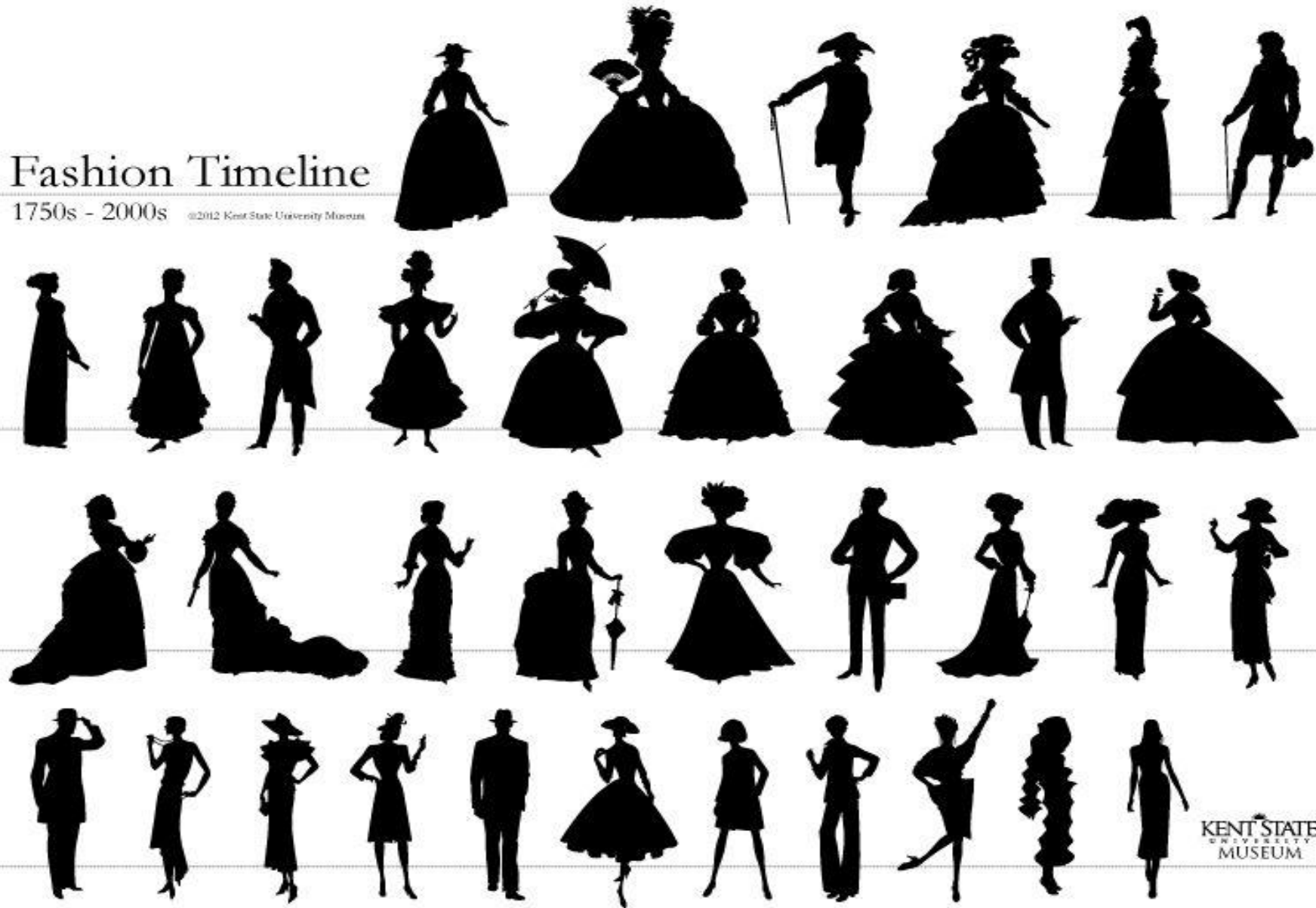
- Accessories: wigs, masks, make-up, hairstyles, shoes, ornamentation.

NOTE: Students are expected to include sketches and/or diagrams.



Fashion Timeline

1750s - 2000s ©2012 Kent State University Museum



KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY
MUSEUM

- Pe
- St
- Fi
- C
- Si
- C
- C
- Fa
- Te
- H
- N

*HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY LINDSEY TURNER
PERFORMED AT THE BARBICAN
STARRING BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH AT HAMLET*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R22yIrNWrfU&list=PLzFhfBIhr68jZ8VfLlv-tNYq4k6JXvfUQq&index=4>



EXTRACT OF HAMLET'S MONOLOGUE, "TO BE OR NOT TO BE..."

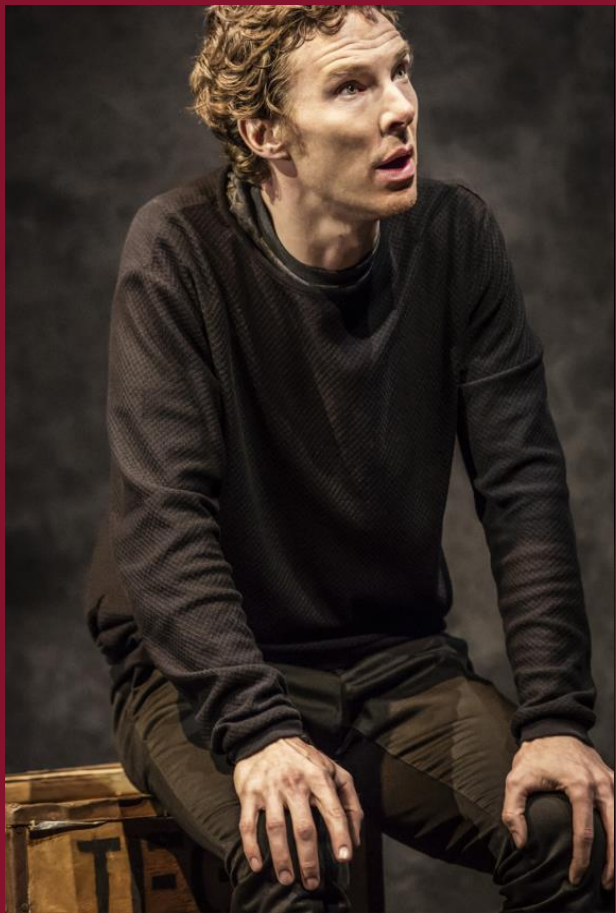
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_e7WGh42HBM



© Tristram Kenton

Contemporary Dress: Throughout the performance we see Hamlet wear contemporary dress, something a modern audience would comfortably recognize and wear themselves. Here we see jeans, jumper, hooded raincoat and then a fencing jacket worn during a fight scene. Does this meet our expectations?

There is nothing particularly remarkable to note about the costume here. Except perhaps the colours, always dark as Hamlet is in mourning for his father. Especially at the start of the play in this first image. However this changes to white for the final scenes – perhaps connoting Hamlet's innocence as he becomes embroiled in Claudius' plot in the final moments of his life.



A Postmodern Take: From seemingly contemporary dress, we then see Hamlet wear a Royal Naval Officer coat, with a graffiti tag, a David Bowie t-shirt and clashing uniform trousers. Here there is a mixture of period dress spanning several decades. Note the colours continue to be dark here.

Perhaps this reveals something about his character, rebellious in nature, refusing to follow the guidance set out by Claudius and Gertrude. Perhaps his decent into madness connoted by the mish-mash of styles and periods. The graffiti style tag of 'King' on his royal coat implies this was done by his own hand to make a point.

The design here takes influence from the 1900s and 60's with rebellious flare.



19th Century Infantryman: Hamlet is known for his decent into madness, even a childlike temperament. This can be seen when he dresses up like a 19th Century Infantryman. There could also be some symbolism of him going to war against the state of Denmark ('*something is rotten in the state of Denmark*' - Marcellus). The colour could connote his pain, feeling wounded and hurt. This is up for interpretation.

There is a lot to talk about in terms of costume design here – the brass detailing, the belt, badges, colour, fabric, collar etc but this must support the production aims and character interpretation.



POSTMODERN APPROACH: *MIXTURE OF DECADES AND PERIODS OF TIME*

“The theatre is a contemporary art with a contemporary audience with a contemporary eye and must be of its time. So a designer does not create an authentic reconstruction of a historical dress but retains its essential attributes while reinterpreting it for today. Often only in retrospect can a production be seen as a creation of the period in which it is staged - by the way it reflects current fashion, its cut, the selected fabrics and trimmings, make-up and hair.”

V&A, Reflecting Historical Periods in Stage Costume, 2020

Shakespeare here is being reimagined for a modern audience, making more interpretive moves in Hamlet's characterisation – costume is one way in which this can be done.

THINGS I KNOW TO BE TRUE BY ANDREW BOVELL
DIRECTED BY GEORDIE BROOKMAN
MOVEMENT DIRECTION BY SCOTT GRAHAM
STARRING KIRSTY OSWALD AS ROSIE PRICE

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWmzVR2NNBU>



Things I Know to Be True.
by Andrew Bovell

FRANTIC ASSEMBLY
STATESA THEATRE COMPANY

2017 UK TOUR

OXFORD PLAYHOUSE Wed 27 - Sat 30 Sep	THE MERCURY THEATRE, COLCHESTER Tue 17 - Sat 21 Oct	NUFFIELD SOUTHAMPTON THEATRES Tue 14 - Sat 18 Nov
THE LOWRY, SALFORD QUAYS Tue 3 - Sat 7 Oct	YORK THEATRE ROYAL Tue 31 Oct - Sat 4 Nov	LIGHTHOUSE, POOLE Tue 21 - Sat 25 Nov
CURVE, LEICESTER Tue 10 - Sat 14 Oct	STORYHOUSE, CHESTER Tue 7 - Sat 11 Nov	LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH Thu 11 Jan - Sat 3 Feb

Extract of Rosie Price's monologue which opens the show.

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=9EHJ_BWCET_Y&LIST=PLKV3ZUIXF-VPTVXSDATKM4JBP9R5JI4FI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EHJ_BWCET_Y&list=PLKV3ZUIXF-VPTVXSDATKM4JBP9R5JI4FI)



Naturalistic and contemporary dress: Firstly, it doesn't seem like there is much to talk about when it comes to Rosie's costume – it's just a dress... This is where you need to dig deeper in the purpose and specifics of the design.

The colour connotes romance, a loving nature, the flowers reflect both her name but also the roses found in her father's garden, also the fact she is trying to grow and 'bloom' as a person. The shoulder ties give this a very feminine feel, almost like a small girl, this reflects she is the youngest of the Price children and is treating like it too. The combination of boots and ankle socks with a feminine dress give this a contemporary feel whilst also reflecting her confused and youthful nature.

How does costume support style? Look at the last image here – the style of the production is physical theatre, here we see an example of a lift, you also saw some movement in the clip. The costume allows the actors to move freely and it is light weight enabling the physical theatre to happen with ease. Imagine if she was wearing one of Hamlet's costumes!



COSTUME TERMINOLOGY

Costume Terminology

- Period
- Style
- Fit
- Cut
- Silhouette
- Condition
- Colour
- Fabric
- Texture
- Hemlines
- Necklines
- Waistlines
- Lapel width
- Trouser
- Skirt
- Dress
- Jacket Shapes

- Accessories: wigs, masks, make-up, hairstyles, shoes, ornamentation.

NOTE: Students are expected to include sketches and/or diagrams.

Effect of Costume

- Convey theme or message from the production.
- Historical and social context.
- Wealth/poverty.
- Nationality.
- Conformity.
- Status or hierarchy.
- Identification to belonging to a particular group.
- Differentiation from others.
- Social standing – age, gender, position.
- Change in characters circumstances.
- Effect of the costume on the movement of the performers.
- Supports characterisation in order to reveal theme and/or message.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING TASK:

- Find a clip of a production that interests you with their approach to costume design.
- Screenshot key costume choices and annotate with terminology and its effect.

ANALYSIS =
WHAT/HOW THE COSTUME DESIGN HAS DONE
AND THE WAY IT **SUPPORTS CHARACTER** AND THE
STYLE AND AIMS OF THE PERFORMANCE.

EXAMPLE COSTUME QUESTION

Briefly explain the effects created by a non-naturalistic approach to costume design at particular moments. Analyse and evaluate how this contributed to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production by referring to two or three specific designs.

(25 marks)

EXTRACT OF AN EXAMPLE RESPONSE

The production that I saw where the designer took a non-naturalistic approach was A Midsummer Night's Dream which I saw as an open-air production in July 2015 at Chepstow Castle. The designer, Molly Dyer, took an unusual approach in her presentation of the fairies; the non-naturalistic design added to the comedy of the play. The role of Puck was played by a woman, Susie Jones, and she was presented to be in a very close relationship with Oberon and always seemed to be trying to seduce him. This was made extra comical by her costume which was a cross between a cow-girl and a buffalo! She wore a hat that appeared to be made of leather (cow-girl) but also had animal horns protruding from the side (buffalo). She had a black leather jerkin on with feathered 'wings' attached to the shoulders and along with all the other fairies, she wore metal bracelets on her wrist. Another design theme shared by all the fairies was a 'lacing' effect that looked like thin leather strands or thongs. Puck's lacing was across the chest of her rather revealing leather bodice top; which was actually later revealed to be a leotard. Sometimes Puck carried and used a lasso, also to comic effect, as when she captured Bottom to put his 'ass-head' on. All the fairies also wore eye masks like 'The Lone Ranger' and Puck was no exception. Puck's 'skirt' was also a mix of human and animal. It began at the waist with a tartan patterned skirt in black and yellow. As Oberon also wore a long tailcoat in the same coloured tartan, this skirt looked as if it was a part of the Fairy King's servant's uniform. Protruding from under this skirt was what could only be described as a furry fringed petticoat with fringes that were uneven in length but, at their longest point, reached Puck's calves.⁶ Puck also wore high heeled cow-boy boots and furry socks! The audience found Puck's costume hilarious, especially at the point where Puck has rounded up all the lovers (using the lasso) and they are lying on the ground.

Band 4 Response.

NON-NATURALISTIC COSTUME DESIGN



The previous question required students to talk about non-naturalistic costume design. So how would we define this? **Non-naturalism** is a broad term for all performance styles that are **not** dependent on a life-like representation of everyday life. We can see here from the images that Musical Theatre would fit a question about non-naturalistic styles of costume well – it is larger than life, colourful, fantastical in part yet highly symbolic.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING TASK:

- Deepen your understanding of non-naturalistic costume by creating a collage of images from different styles of theatre.
- This could be Musical Theatre, Contemporary Theatre, Shakespearean, Steven Berkoff.
- Under each image make a justification as to why this is non-naturalistic or where it might have taken inspiration from.