

Nelson Fields
Costume Designer
Summary – Creative Activity/Research
1998 – 2003

Production Information:

Name of Production: *As You Like It*
by William Shakespeare
Venue/Type: University of Kentucky Theatre, Lexington, KY
Guignol Theatre
Educational Production
Creative Team: Director: Russell Henderson
Costume Designer: Nelson Fields
Scene Designer: Erin Boone *
Lighting Designer: Michael Allen *
Production Dates: November 8 – 10, 15 – 18, 2001
Selection: As resident costume designer for university theatre productions, I am responsible for designing costumes for all productions.

* Student Designers

Production Information:

Production Style: Comedy
Theatrical Realism and Fantasy.
Production Concept: The director initially wanted to use the work Antoine Watteau as a basis for the design of the production. He felt strongly the setting should be France in the 18th century. Even though the language is strongly Elizabethan English, the feel of the play was French.
Costume Design Concept Statement: I began with the work of Watteau in looking at the fashion. There was a good deal of theatricality in his paintings. Many of the garments depicted did not relate to what is known of 18th century garments. I felt they were either costumes or invented pieces of clothing. Since many of the characters are very theatrical (Touchstone, the fool for example) or run away from reality (to the Forest of Arden), I felt I could use the

Research: theatricality of Watteau's paintings. As the process continued, we also looked at other French painters of the 18th century: Francois Boucher and Jean-Honore Fragonard. I also adapted my color palette from the paintings. Research in addition to the painters mentioned earlier included research of early 18th century clothing (c. 1720). While I have created costumes for the 18th century in other productions, I still studied the clothing of the period. This is standard for anyone designing costumes. You never rely solely on previous productions. There is always something new to be learned and understood about the clothing of a period. This was somewhat different as I had to relate the clothing studies to the various paintings of the period.

Process:

Methods Utilized: This production design followed a normal design process as I have outlined it in my Statement on Creative Activity and Research. I did rent some items from the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts to supplement the stock of costumes for the ensemble. That required two trips to the University of Illinois to select wardrobe and bring it back. This is not uncommon in a university production of this size.

Time Frame: 5 week period for the design. I was on site at the theatre for the entire production period.

Budget Considerations: \$5,000 for materials

Evaluation:

Reviews: See outside peer review by Professor Holly Cole of Ohio University posted in Tenure Dossier.

Personal Evaluation: My work on this production was strong. I had to collate rented costumes on the ensemble with costumes I designed for the principal characters. Since I was able to travel to the Krannert Center to select the wardrobe myself that made this somewhat

easier to accomplish. I was also pleased with the overall effect of the costumes based on the paintings from which I worked. The theatricality of the costumes complemented the play nicely.