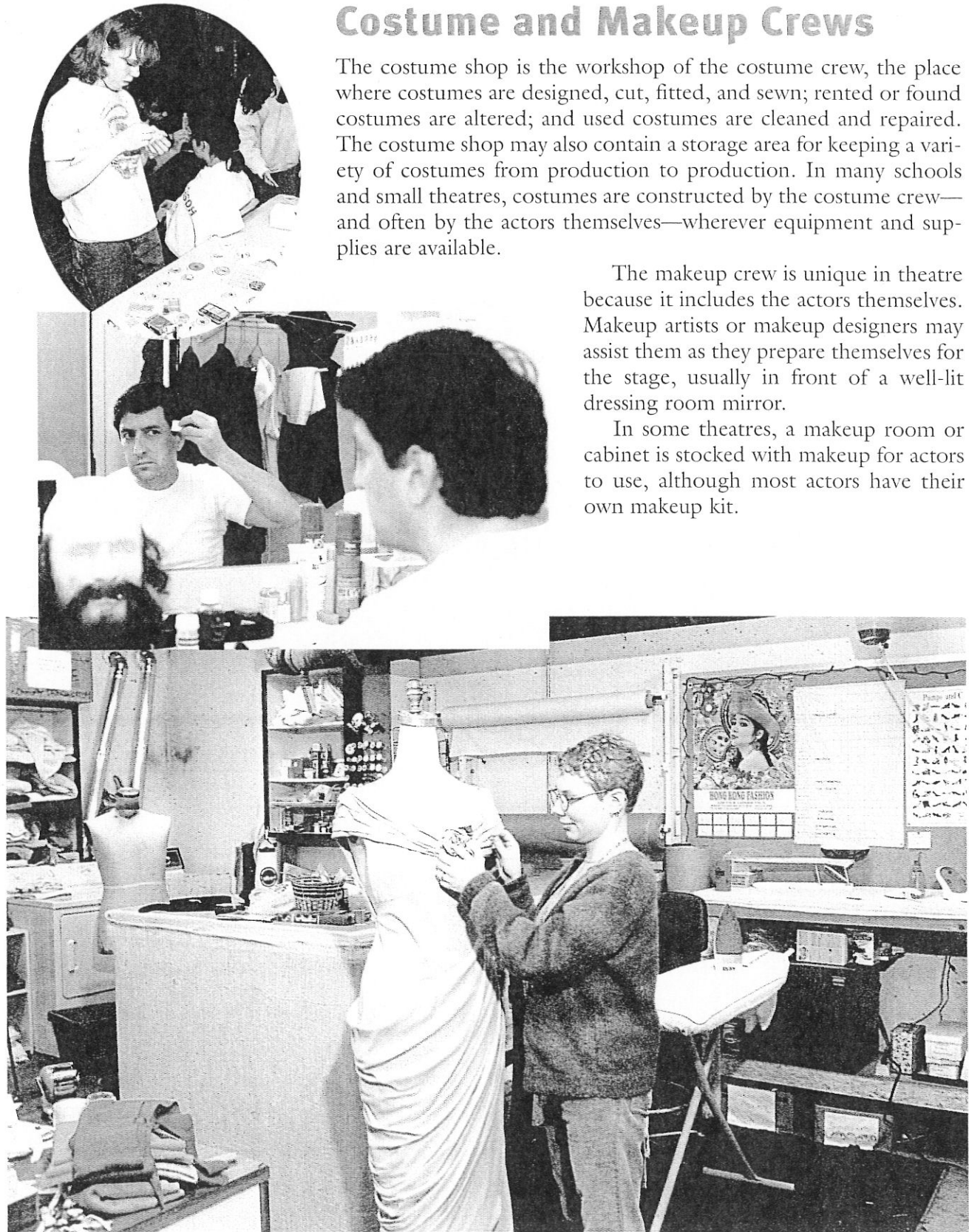


Costume and Makeup Crews

The costume shop is the workshop of the costume crew, the place where costumes are designed, cut, fitted, and sewn; rented or found costumes are altered; and used costumes are cleaned and repaired. The costume shop may also contain a storage area for keeping a variety of costumes from production to production. In many schools and small theatres, costumes are constructed by the costume crew—and often by the actors themselves—wherever equipment and supplies are available.

The makeup crew is unique in theatre because it includes the actors themselves. Makeup artists or makeup designers may assist them as they prepare themselves for the stage, usually in front of a well-lit dressing room mirror.

In some theatres, a makeup room or cabinet is stocked with makeup for actors to use, although most actors have their own makeup kit.



Costumes: Equipment and Supplies

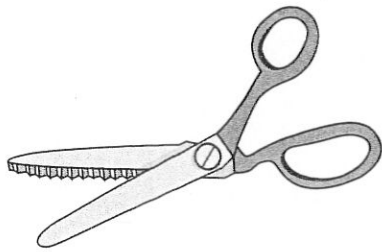
Basic Equipment

MEASURING TOOLS

plastic tape measure for taking measurements and general measuring
sewing gauge for accurate measuring of hems and seam allowances

MARKING TOOLS

tracing paper and tracing wheel for transferring markings from pattern to fabric
chalk- or wax-based tailor's chalk for marking fabric during fittings



Pinking shears

CUTTING TOOLS

shears, or scissors for cutting fabric with a straight cut
pinking shears for cutting fabric with a zigzag that won't ravel
seam ripper for taking stitches out of fabric
long, wide cutting table (about 6 feet by 4 feet) for spreading out fabric for cutting

FITTING EQUIPMENT

dress form, or dressmaker's dummy in adjustable size for fitting and sizing costumes
full-length mirror for actors and crew members to see the costume from all angles

SEWING EQUIPMENT

straight-stitch sewing machine for sewing together cut pieces of fabric

CLEANING AND PRESSING EQUIPMENT

washer and dryer for laundering costumes
steam iron and ironing board for pressing fabric
portable steamer for taking minor wrinkles out of clothing and for shaping felt

STORAGE

bins or drawers for storing fabrics, scraps, jewelry, accessories, patterns, and sewing supplies
moveable clothes rack for hanging costumes during construction and throughout the production



Seam ripper

Materials and Supplies

GENERAL

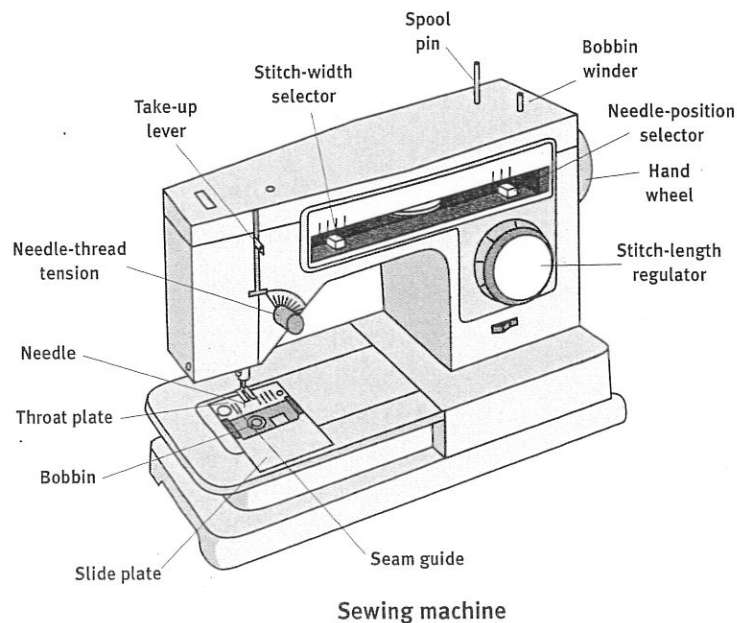
fabric, thread, pin cushion, thimble, pins (straight, glass-headed, safety)

SEWING NEEDLES

general hand-sewing needles, darning needles, upholstery needles, sewing machine needles

FASTENERS

straight pins, safety pins, grommet set, seam-binding tape, hot-glue gun, staple gun, glue sticks, snaps, hooks and eyes, Velcro, assorted buttons



Costume Management

Because each costume has several pieces and each character wears at least one costume, the costume crew must be extremely organized. Most professional costumers become adept at drawing up and keeping detailed lists and forms.

Costume Plot

To keep track of the costume items for each character, develop a **costume plot**. List each character and each scene in the play in which the character appears. Then itemize each costume piece the character wears for each appearance. If the character changes costumes within a scene, note that as well.

Costume Plot					
Show: <i>This Piece of Land</i>					
Act & Scene	Character	Actor	Costume	Accessories	Notes
<i>One-act, no scene breaks</i>	<i>The Singer</i>	<i>Wade</i>	<i>Faded jeans Checkered shirt</i>	<i>Black or brown boots</i>	<i>1930s style; very worn</i>
<i>One-act, no scene breaks</i>	<i>Rosa</i>	<i>Tara</i>	<i>House Dress</i>	<i>Apron Black or brown shoes Kerchief Wedding ring</i>	<i>1930s style; very worn</i>

Costume List

The costume plot will help you organize your thoughts and develop a **costume list** for each character, which should list all of his or her clothing and accessories. When you are ready to obtain or build the costumes, you can use your costume lists to create a pull/rent/buy/borrow/build list.

Costume List		Pull	Rent	Buy	Borrow	Build	Size
Show: <i>This Piece of Land</i> Sketch #: <i>2</i>							
Character: <i>Rosa</i> Actor: <i>Tara</i>							
Item	Notes						
<i>House dress</i>	<i>cotton; blue; worn</i>	x					<i>12</i>
<i>Apron</i>	<i>white; cotton; worn</i>					x	
<i>Black or brown shoes</i>	<i>thrift store; lace-up; distress</i>			x			<i>8</i>
<i>Kerchief</i>	<i>blue; worn (fade with bleach)</i>			x			
<i>Wedding ring</i>	<i>cheap; paint gold</i>			x			<i>7</i>



Pull/Rent/Buy/Borrow/Build List

To organize the sewing or acquisition of each costume, make a **pull/rent/buy/borrow/build list**. The list should identify the actor, character, and pieces required, as well as size information. Copy the list five times, so that you have a pull list, a rent list, a buy list, a borrow list, and a build list. On each list, check off the items that apply to that list. Assign members of the costume crew to take on the tasks.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pull	<input type="checkbox"/> Rent	<input type="checkbox"/> Buy	<input type="checkbox"/> Borrow	<input type="checkbox"/> Build	
Show: <i>This Piece of Land</i>		Crew: <i>Maria</i>		Era: <i>early 1930s</i>	
Done	Character	Actor	Item	Description	Size
X	<i>The Singer</i>	<i>Wade</i>	<i>shirt</i>	<i>checkered</i>	<i>M-</i>
	<i>Rosa</i>	<i>Tara</i>	<i>dress</i>	<i>cotton; blue; very worn</i>	<i>12</i>
X	<i>Perry</i>	<i>Dareesh</i>	<i>shirt</i>	<i>blue; very worn; plaid</i>	<i>L</i>
X	<i>Sister Waters</i>	<i>Nina</i>	<i>dress</i>	<i>collar; conservative</i>	<i>14</i>
X	<i>Sister Waters</i>	<i>Nina</i>	<i>handbag</i>	<i>white; simple</i>	
X	<i>Sister Waters</i>	<i>Nina</i>	<i>hat</i>	<i>to match dress; simple</i>	<i>fit</i>
X	<i>Miss Nancy</i>	<i>Janelle</i>	<i>dress</i>	<i>pastel; summer; youthful</i>	<i>10</i>



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August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* offers a costume designer the opportunity to play with dressing real characters in surreal costumes.

Costume Measurement Cards

Have each actor fill out a costume measurement card. You will need to know the measurements and standard clothing size of an actor when you pull, rent, buy, or borrow clothing and to purchase a pattern if you need to build the costume. These same cards (updated if necessary) may be used again for other productions with the same actors.

Costume Production Calendar

Most costume designers establish a production calendar. To create your own production calendar, count backward from opening night to identify final dates when costumes must be ready for performance and rehearsals; dates for **fittings**, in which actors try on costumes to assess necessary adjustments; and dates for sewing, shopping, measuring, and design approval. Remember to keep receipts and careful records of purchases in order to make exchanges, return items, and get reimbursed.





Amazing decorative and special effects can be accomplished in costuming, as shown here in *Juan Darien* by Julie Taymor and Elliot Goldenthal. Taymor was also director and designer of the costumes and set.

Decorations and Special Effects

Costumes often require treatments that decorate, texturize, or age them. Most **decorations** consist of lace, trim, or appliqué materials that are sewn or glued in place with a hot-glue gun. Some decorations are painted on with indelible markers or fabric paint. You can stencil a border onto a dress or stamp patterns with shapes cut from hard foam or sponge material dipped in paint. You can achieve **texturizing** with spray paints or a spray gun filled with dye. Selective use of bleach on a sponge can also add texture by removing or muting color. (Bleach will weaken the fibers of many fabrics, so use it sparingly.) To **age** a costume, distress the elbows, knees, collars, cuffs, and hems with sandpaper or a wire brush. Stretch knits out of shape by wetting them and pulling on them in the places where they are likely to stretch with use, such as cuffs and knees.

When you iron a garment that you have painted or texturized, use a pressing cloth (a white cotton cloth) between the iron and the garment. This will keep your iron clean and prevent it from sticking to—and perhaps burning—your masterpiece.



Costume Techniques

Specialized costume techniques involve some of the same products as those used for prop construction. As with props, the range of materials makes constructing costumes an exciting and creative challenge.

Armor

Painted cardboard, papier mâché, and wood are still common materials for making shields and swords, but various other materials may be used for the armor and helmets. One of these is a thermoplastic substance called Hexolite. When heated with hot water, you can shape, mold, fold, tuck, and stretch it. Hexolite forms may lose shape under hot lights or if the actor becomes overheated. Another possibility is industrial-weight sized felt (with a high percentage of wool fiber), which must be cut, soaked in white glue (two parts) and water (one part), pinned to a mold, and dried (possibly for several days). Following the molding and drying processes, you can easily paint each of these materials and then detail them with decorative trim or other materials that simulate the rivets of armor.

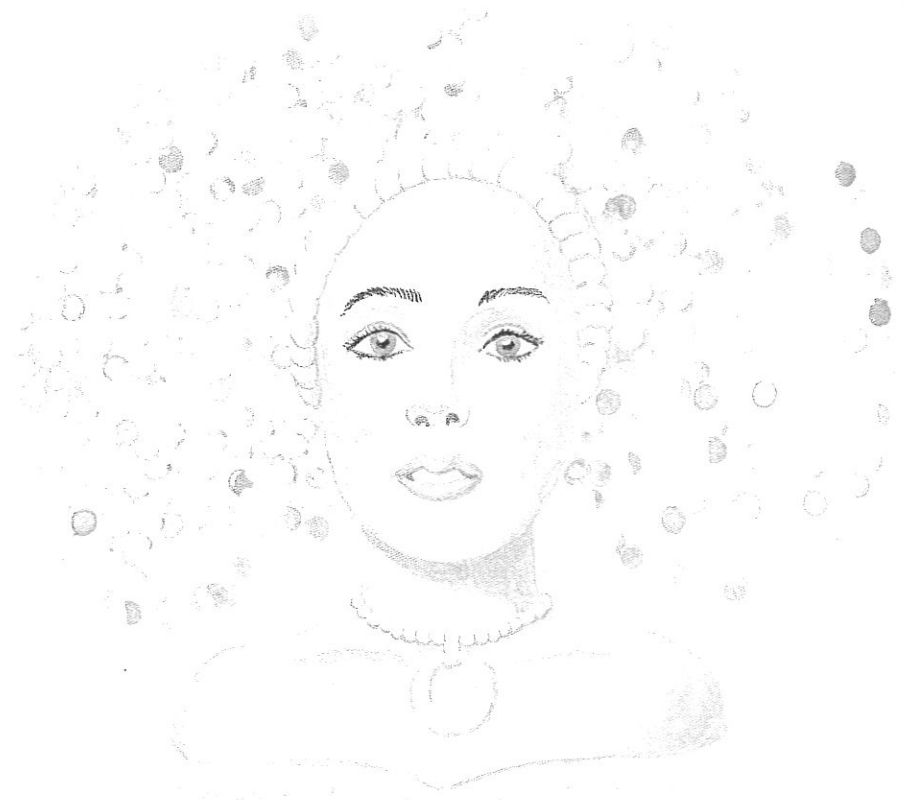
Armor varies considerably over the course of its use in history and from country to country, so be certain to research the design you need. Medieval plays often require a type of armor called chain mail, which is generally covered by a tunic emblazoned with a symbol. Although you can rent chain mail, you can also make it by using heavy-yarn, open-weave or knitted fabrics. Dye the fabric dark gray or black, and then dry-brush the surface with silver. If the weave is very open, add a black lining.



For this production, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is set in the Elizabethan period, requiring that armor of that period be reproduced.

Period hats and headpieces can be constructed in a number of ways. Buckram, a fabric sized with glue, is frequently used in millinery (hat) construction. When the glue is dampened, buckram becomes soft and pliable and can be configured into many different shapes. When the glue dries, the fabric stiffens again, and the hat or headpiece can be decorated. Felt hats with broad brims and deep crowns can be reconfigured into hats of various styles. Steaming a felt hat will make it soft and pliable. Then, using a hat mold, the original hat can be reshaped into a new hat. When dry, the felt retains the new shape and is ready to be decorated.

You can use existing hats or headbands as the base on which to build a costume headpiece. For example, you can make a replica of the headpiece shown below by cutting out the half-moon shape from strong cardboard or buckram, cutting out the head opening and gluing a plastic headband to the rim of it. Using a hot-glue gun, you can then decorate the headpiece with gold sequins. You can attach a fabric veil to the back of the headpiece.



Jewelry and Ornaments

Keep a collection of junk jewelry in your costume workshop, separated according to size and use. Remember to check the light reflectivity of brooches, necklaces, bracelets and other pieces of jewelry; light reflecting from jewelry may distract the audience. Either soap or wax the pieces to reduce glare.

You can also make jewelry and ornaments such as buckles, clasps, crowns, and brooches from papier-mâché, plaster of Paris, or sized felt and incorporate glass beads, bits of metal, or fake gemstones into the objects as you are making them. Foam rubber, which takes dye, paint, or metallics, can be carved or cut into bold decorative shapes for lightweight jewelry or accessories. A serrated knife works best.

For pendant chains, visit your local hardware store where you may find small brass or chrome chains, which can be cut to the desired length, or lightweight, large-link chains such as those used for hanging plants or lamps; the large-link chains can be painted to match the pendant.

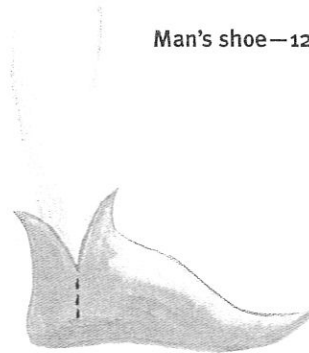
Footwear

Shoes that actors wear often determine their stature and movement. For both men and women, heel height is critical. Only in a play set after 1900, for example, would women appropriately wear high heels; for plays set during earlier periods, women should wear medium- or low-heels or slippers.

If a period shoe is required, the actor can wear a contemporary shoe or slipper covered with brocade or velvet and decorated with bows, buckles, ties, or jewelry. Inexpensive bedroom slippers can be recut and reshaped on top, covered by gluing on fabric, or dyed and trimmed to match a costume. Or, the soles only can be used as a shoe base on which to build a shoe. Simply cut off the existing top and add another with a hot-glue gun. This method can also be used to make sandals or medieval slippers with curved toes. For boots, make a boot top of leather, heavy vinyl, or industrial-weight felt, cut and sewn to leave one opening in the top and one where the sole would be. Attach an elastic band to the bottom and slip it over an actor's existing boot; this solves the problem of finding boots of a certain type in a particular size.



Man's shoe—1200s



Woman's shoe—
early 1800s

