



Deitra Kalyn
Mrs. Lovett (detail), 2012
Watercolour, pen on paper

DESIGN FOR PERFORMANCE

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 Alberta
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 The
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of
Artists

MANDATE of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) was established under the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act, September 1, 1991. Since 1972, the AFA and its predecessor foundation, the Alberta Art Foundation, have been collecting art work and funding a wide range of cultural programs.

The purposes of the Foundation are:

To support, promote and contribute to the development of literary, performing, visual and media arts in Alberta

To provide people and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts in Alberta

To foster and promote the appreciation of art works by Alberta artists

To collect, preserve and display art works by Alberta artists

To encourage Alberta artists in their work

The AFA has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1981. The mandate of the AFA Travelling Exhibition (Trex) Program is to provide all Albertans with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their communities.

Three regional galleries and one arts organization manage the travelling exhibition program for the AFA:

Region 1 - Northwest

The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie (formerly the Prairie Art Gallery) / www.prairiegallery.com

Region 2 - Northeast / North Central

The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton / www.youraga.ca

Region 3 - Southwest

Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary / www.artists-society.ab.ca

Region 4 - Southeast

Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat / www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca

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CURATOR'S COMMENTS by Caroline Loewen

Theatre design encompasses a variety of different disciplines, which are collectively known as scenography. Related to this term are the individual disciplines of set design, costume design, lighting design, sound design, and in our case puppet design. Scenography though is more than just a sum of these parts. Scenography relates to the overall artistic vision of a work concerning the visual and spatial composition of a performance. To achieve this vision, scenographers and individual designers work very closely with the directors and writers. Many modern designers consider visual design equally as important as the written text and the performance itself.

If the text is concerned with the words and the performance with the action, then scenography can be said to be primarily interested in space. In her book *What is Scenography?*, Pamela Howard writes that, "the world view of scenography reveals that space is the first and most important challenge for a scenographer. Space is part of the scenographic vocabulary. We talk about translating and adapting space; creating suggestive space and linking space with dramatic time. We think of space in action, how we can make it and break it, what we need to create the right space, and how it can be constructed with form and colour to enhance the human being and the text. Some play games with space, searching for its metaphor and meaning in the quest to define dramatic space. There is a complex alchemy between spaces and productions that provokes the creators to tame an unknown space into a space that eventually will fit the production like a glove." (Pamela Howard, *What is Scenography?*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 1) In order to define the space, the designers work with colour, texture, line, composition and architectural features. The set, costumes, lighting and sound are specifically designed to fit the space of the theatre, and often would not work in other spaces. Designing for a travelling show then, as the Old Trouts do, brings many new challenges.

Since the designers work very closely with the directors to achieve the desired aesthetic, they must find a way to communicate the ideas in their minds using ground plans, elevations, photographs, on-site drawings, renderings and set models. Included in this exhibition are different examples of these designs as well as examples of the resulting costume or set.

The initial way of brainstorming ideas and designs is often just with a sketchbook. Designers will make rough sketches of costumes and sets to test out an idea and to help them visualize the designs. The sketches can also show the progression of an idea throughout the production. **Bretta Gerecke's** sketch books illustrate this stage of design. The sketchbook gives the designer freedom to work and imagine, free from the constraints of reality. At this stage, the main concern for the designer is the feel of the show, logistics will be figured out later.

In a later design stage, the designer will have to include a more formal plan including elevations, measurements and other construction instructions in order for the technicians to be able to build the set and make the costumes. Some of **Terry Gunvordahl's** designs show a more formal design including elevations, and construction instructions. In *Fence Units* for example, he includes measurements and a scale as well as notations about colour. In *Elevations*, he includes notes on what type of finish to use as well as measurements. Some of his designs are more conceptual though. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, you can see different levels of finish in each of the four drawings. Although *The Return of Herbert Bracewell* does not include specific measurements or fabrics or color, it shows such incredible detail that the set builders were able to recreate this identical scene on set.

CURATOR'S COMMENTS

The designs in **Deitra Kalyn's** renderings will translate directly into costumes custom fit to the actors and actresses in the production. In some cases, Kalyn has even included the fabric swatches that will be used in the final costume. In the renderings from 'Mom's the Word' and 'An Inspector Calls', you can see the progression from design to costume. Many of the details in the renderings can be seen in the finished costumes. In her conceptual drawings, she has also been able to capture character through the use of expression and costume. Mrs. Lovett has a devious smile, Johanna looks innocent and Judge Turpin appears rather sinister.

Besides these drawings and photographs, there isn't much that remains from the production itself. Sets are dismantled, costumes put into storage and sometimes even altered and reused, and the performance itself is lost as it was only ever intended to be temporary. Production photographs, and occasionally video recordings, are all that is left to document the actual performance. But both of these are inadequate as all aspects of the performance - lighting, sound, makeup, set, costumes, etc. - are intended to be seen live and therefore lose some of their vitality and believability in digital reproduction. Lighting can seem harsh, movement unnatural, makeup garish and sets wooden, when viewed through the secondary medium of film. Because of this it is important that the designs capture not only the specific details of production but the feel of a performance or of a character as well, to help document it for history.

The one exception to this is with puppets. In this case the actual performers remain, in their original costumes, albeit lacking in the animation which was provided by the puppeteers. The **Old Trout Puppet Workshop** has for years been creating puppets that engage the audience and even show changing emotions on their wooden faces. Anyone who has seen one of their productions can attest to this. Even just by looking at the inanimate faces on display, you can get a glimpse of the puppet's personality and character. Some, like the *Monkey*, look very menacing, while others like *Gepeto*, look a bit sad and forlorn.

The **Old Trouts** show great innovation in their puppets. The larger puppets are made to be worn by the puppeteers and are actually outfitted with helmets inside their bodies to fit on the puppeteers' head. Others are made to be held and controlled by hand movements. The performances take place on a small stage, so in order to have a bigger range in settings and to show distance, sometimes there is a large and small version of the same puppet, like *Robespierre*. Others, like *Sans-culottes* are designed to be seen from a specific perspective - in this case the side or profile view.

All of the designs included are just one part of a bigger story and can never reproduce the experience of actually being at the theatre. But they can teach us something about design and story-telling, and about the different elements that go into both.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

BRETTA GERECKE

Bretta graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Interior Design in 1992, and from the University of Alberta with a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design in 1996. She works across Canada as a designer for theatre and opera. Bretta is the resident designer at Catalyst Theatre, where she has designed world premieres, which have toured internationally to Great Britain, Australia, and the U.S. and across Canada. Bretta also works at The Citadel Theatre, Canadian Stage, Edmonton Opera, Calgary Opera, Pacific Opera, Theatre Calgary, The Banff Centre and Factory Theatre. She is the recipient of over twenty Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards, Jessie Richardson Awards and Betty Mitchell Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Set, Lighting and Costume Design; The Enbridge Award for Best Emerging Artist; The Global Women of Vision Award; Edmonton's Top 40 Under 40 and was short-listed twice for the Siminovitch Prize. Bretta designed a summer home on Devil's Lake, Alberta, and continues her work as an archaeological illustrator.

TERRY GUNVORDAHL

Terry Gunvordahl has designed more than two hundred shows for theatres across Canada and in the United States. His designs have appeared in film (*The Assassination of Jesse James...*), television (*North of Sixty*), and museum exhibits (*Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park*). This past season he has designed for Alberta Theatre Projects; (*The Penelopiad*) Vertigo Theatre; (*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*) and for Sage Theatre; (*Girl in a Goldfish bowl*), all of which were nominated for a Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding Design. His recent designs are at Stage West (*Summer in the City*), Vertigo (*Rope*) and Shadow Theatre in Edmonton (*Fool for Love*).

Recently Terry rediscovered his acting roots and has performed with Sage Theatre (*Heroes*), with Downstage (*The Dishwashers*) where he was nominated for a Betty Mitchell award. He played J. M. Barrie in John Pielmier's one man show, *Courage* and portrayed Krapp in Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* for Lunchbox Theatre. Terry has also appeared in the docudrama *Pet Heroes* and the soon to be released feature *Burlesque Assassins*.

DEITRA KALYN

Deitra is a Betty Mitchell Award recipient, and Jesse Richardson nominated designer who holds a Fine Arts degree from ACAD. She hangs her hat in Calgary and has been designing theatre, dance and film across the prairies for the past seven seasons. Past credits include designing set and/or costumes for companies such as Ground Zero and Hit & Myth, Vertigo Theatre, Theatre Calgary, Alberta Theatre Projects, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Y-Stage, Globe Theatre, Stage West, Sage Theatre, Mount Royal University, Lunchbox Theatre, Ghost River, and Quest Theatre. Her work has also been featured in various feature and short films.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

THE OLD TROUT PUPPET WORKSHOP

The Old Trout Puppet Workshop was founded by a gang of childhood buddies in the strange and brutal winter of 1999. Banding together in a desperate attempt to defend ourselves in the face of the coming Y2K apocalypse, we gathered on a ranch in Southern Alberta. There we lived in a coal-heated shack, built puppets in a barn, fed the pigs, collected the eggs, and premiered our first show in the old bunkhouse to an audience of cowboys and Hutterites.

The Hutterites liked the show more than the cowboys did. We're not sure what that means. But they helped us load our stuff into a horse trailer, and drove us into Calgary where we performed our first puppet show at the High Performance Rodeo.

The show went over pretty well, and seeing as how the apocalypse hadn't happened, we figured we might as well keep at it. And so we have, for over a decade. Over the years, we've made eight shows, for adults and sometimes children. We've toured across the continent and also in Europe. We built a forty-five foot tall wind-powered cosmological clock/puppet machine for Big Rock Brewery. We've made several short films, including a video for the much-beloved pop star Feist, which won a Juno Award for Best Video. We've written children's books (the *Preposterous Fables for Unusual Children* series), presented some theatre (*Sailor Boy & Dziddiliboom* by the Czapno Ensemble, and *How I Became Invisible* by the Clunk Puppet Lab), collaborated with Dandi Productions on a series of Roald Dahl poems adapted for orchestra and puppets, painted paintings, sculpted sculptures, and thrown some parties. We teach an annual puppetry intensive at the Banff Centre to folks from all over the world. We had a house band, the Agnostic Mountain Gospel Choir, which was more popular in Ireland than here for some reason. We moved from the ranch to Calgary, then moved to Mexico, then moved back to Calgary again. Lord knows what's coming – we're working on a public sculpture, a Christmas TV special, and another puppet show, which might be a sci-fi epic, we're not sure yet.

Peter Balkwill is one of the founding Old Trouts. He holds an MFA in Acting from the University of Washington in Seattle (2000), as well as a BFA in Theatre from University of Victoria (1997). He has served as the head of movement at the University of Victoria (2001/2002) and has led workshops extensively in Canada and the U.S. Peter has worked nine summers and four full seasons at the Rocky Mountain YMCA, Outdoor Centre, instructing groups through environmental education. Peter would like to thank his family, Nan and Walker (little Pityu) for their unwavering support of his artistic practice.

Pityu Kenderes is one of the founding Old Trouts. Pityu is a sculptor and painter and puppeteer, in live theater and for film. He has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design, and a Graduate degree in Fine Arts from the University of Calgary.

Judd Palmer is one of the founding Old Trouts. He attended Trinity College at the University of Toronto where he received a degree in philosophy, God help him. He also writes and illustrates children's books, including a series called *Preposterous Fables for Unusual Children* and, most recently, a book called *The Umbrella*.

INVENTORY

Artist	Title	Production	Medium	Date
Balkwill, Peter	Robespierre (small)	The Last Supper of Antonin Careme	mixed media puppet	2004
Balkwill, Peter	Don Juan	The Erotic Anguish of Don Juan	mixed media puppet	2009
Balkwill, Peter	Monkey	Pinnocchio	mixed media puppet	2004
Gerecke, Bretta	Sketchbooks	Various	pencil, pen on paper	n.d.
Gunvordahl, Terry	The Mystery of Edwin Drood	The Mystery of Edwin Drood	ink on paper	2007
Gunvordahl, Terry	The Return of Herbert Bracewell	The Return of Herbert Bracewell	ink on vellum paper	1986
Gunvordahl, Terry	Elevations	Hansel and Gretel	ink on paper	1994
Gunvordahl, Terry	Fence Units	Hansel and Gretel	ink on paper	2002
Kalyn, Deitra	Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett	Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street	watercolour, pen on paper	2012
Kalyn, Deitra	Judge Turpin and Johanna	Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street	watercolour, pen on paper	2012
Kalyn, Deitra	Adolfo Pirelli and Tobias Ragg	Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street	watercolour, pen on paper	2012
Kalyn, Deitra	Alienators	Moms the Word: For Crying Out Loud!	watercolour, pen on paper/ photograph	2010
Kalyn, Deitra	Broadway Boobies	Moms the Word: For Crying Out Loud!	watercolour, pen on paper/ photograph	2010
Kalyn, Deitra	Sheila Birling	An Inspector Calls	watercolour, pen, fabric on paper/ photograph	2008
Kalyn, Deitra	Sybil Birling	An Inspector Calls	watercolour, pen, fabric on paper/ photograph	2008
Kenderes, Pityu	Robespierre (large)	The Last Supper of Antonin Careme	mixed media puppet	2004
Kenderes, Pityu	Sans-culottes	The Last Supper of Antonin Careme	mixed media puppet	2004
Palmer, Judd	Gepeto	Pinnocchio	mixed media puppet	2004
Palmer, Judd	Pinocchio	Pinnocchio	mixed media puppet	2004

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is a presentation of the
Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program



Developed by the **Alberta Society of Artists**

Exhibition Curator, Caroline Loewen

Art works from Artist's inventories

Interpretive / Educational Guide prepared by Kate Schutz

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