

*What is the process? (What is the process for creating a set?)*

Well, that really depends on the designer. But there are a few steps that are the same across the board, especially in theatre. They are:

First and foremost, reading the script. Knowing the story and what the writer or director is trying to portray is the most important part. The designer has to understand the story in order to design it. If designing for a musical, listening to the music is key as well. It also gives the designer an idea what the tone of the production is.

Research. Researching the era, other productions and designs, and anything else that would give a better insight to what the film or play should look like is necessary. It can be a great springboard for more ideas as well.

Sketches. It isn't as simple as it may sound. There's a lot to keep in mind when drawing out the design. Not only what has been found while researching, but the dimensions of the space that will be used, the budget, the portability (if it needs to be moved during the play), deciding what type of set is best, the building time, and things of that nature. Once some final sketches have been made, they're shown to the director. If he or she isn't pleased, or it just won't work, the set designer goes back to the drawing board and tries again. This can happen more than once. It all comes down to what the director is looking for.

Drafts and models. Drafts are technical drawings, they're created on vector software programs, it tells the builders the dimensions of the set pieces, and sometimes what material would be best to use. Models are just what they sound like, a smaller version of the theatre and set. They show how the pieces go onto the stage and how they should be painted.

*How does it contribute? (How does it contribute to the play?)*

That could be considered a matter of opinion and even artistic style or preference. My mentor, Larry Cook, a technical theatre professor at University of North Georgia, thinks that set design is unnecessary; it's all about the actor's performance, the set is just an aid to them. However, I think that the set design has the potential to make or break the overall "feel" of the play. The purpose is to make the story being performed become real, so it's then an experience to the audience. This is done through the design, because it creates the environment - whether real or abstract. It establishes the "world" of the play, and how the actors are going to move and where. Ideally the set does some of the storytelling as well by setting the emotional tone of the play through the use of color and shape. So, therefore, visuals are very necessary in productions.

*Who else is involved? (Who else, or what other divisions of the the art department, are involved in filmmaking?)*

The list shown is just a handful of people that are in the art department alone. There are many other departments in the film industry. Such as production, camera and lighting, costumes, hair and makeup, special effects, stunts, and post-production. Each of these has, what could be called, sub-departments, and there are dozens of people that work with the department head to get the job done. Producing a film, or even a play, relies very heavily on teamwork, and each person has a crucial role to play.

“Creating an environment that supports the storytelling and mood of a film is the work of the Art Department.”