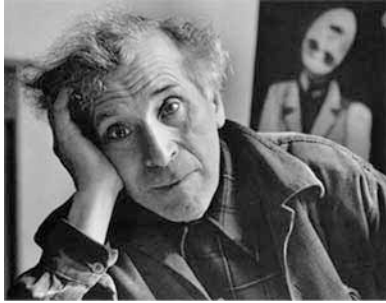


Lesson #18: Marc Chagall and “The Magic flute”

“For me there is nothing on earth that approaches those two perfections, “The Magic Flute” and the Bible.” —Marc Chagall



In 1964, the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York City commissioned Marc Chagall to design the stage sets and costumes for its first production of Mozart’s acclaimed opera “The Magic Flute.” In the following three years, the artist created 13 large curtains, 26 small curtains, and 121 costumes and masks. In addition to the set design, Chagall completed two monumental murals, entitled *The Sources of Music* and *The Triumph of Music*.

The image on the bottom right is the poster Chagall designed for advertisement of “The Magic Flute.” Not only does the work depict five main characters from the opera, it also pertains to the Garden of Eden. Throughout his artistic career, Chagall became enamored with portraying images from the Bible. It is believed Chagall attempted to draw the parallels between “The Magic Flute” and the Bible as they both shared fundamental principles of goodness and truth.

Who is Marc Chagall?

Marc Chagall was born on July 7, 1887 in a little Russian village just outside of Vitebsk. He grew up the eldest of nine children in a traditional Jewish family. His father Khatskl (Zakhar) Shagal, a herring merchant, strongly disapproved of his passion for art, however his mother, Feige-Itte, encouraged him to pursue art school in St. Petersburg. It was here that his unique style that we recognize today began to develop. Whimsical images of his childhood and the village he grew up in frequently began to appear and continued to be his artistic motivation throughout his career.

Despite living through two world wars, the Russian Revolution, and the Holocaust, his work typically depicted the brighter side of life and he remained an eternal optimist. While other artists followed avant-garde movements, such as fauvism, cubism, and expressionism, Chagall remained independent with his own distinct style. He was untainted by the modern art experiments surrounding him, revealing the pure and honest nature within himself.

Chagall experimented with various art forms, such as painting, printmaking, mosaics, stained



glass, and costume and set design. His extensive art career continued through March 28, 1985, when he passed away in his studio at the age of 97.

To view other works of art by Marc Chagall, check out the exhibition, *Chagall*, featured at Appleton Art Center through November 15, 2008.

Lesson #19: Costume Designing

Costume designers create the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories for the actors to wear in performance. Depending on their style and complexity, costumes may be made, bought, revamped out of existing stock or rented. Their designs need to faithfully reflect the personalities of the characters in the script.

The shapes, colors and textures that a costume designer chooses make an immediate and powerful visual statement to the audience. Creative collaboration among the costume designer, the director and the set and lighting designers ensures that the costumes are smoothly integrated into the production as a whole.

Stage costumes can provide viewers with information about a character's occupation, social status, gender, age, sense of style and tendencies towards conformity or individualism. Some other intentions for costumes are:

- Emphasize the mood and style of the production.
- Distinguish between major and minor characters.
- Indicate relationships between characters.
- Change an actor's appearance.
- Suggest changes in character's growth and age.
- Be aesthetically pleasing to the eye.
- Costume designs also may include accessories such as hats, jewelry, scarves, glasses, or gloves. These costume props add a great deal of visual interest to the overall design of the costume. These items help identify one character from the next.

Costume designers focus their work around the script being produced. If the production is set in a specific historical era, the style during this period will need to be studied. To encourage ideas, the costume designer will create a few rough sketches to present to the director and the rest of the design team.

Another responsibility of the costume designer is to draw up the costume plot. The costume plot is a list or chart that shows which characters appear in each scene, what they are wearing and their overall movement throughout the play. This helps keep track of the specific costume needs of each character. It can also be aware of any potential costume challenges, such as very quick changes between scenes.

When the director and production team have approved the costume designer's preliminary sketches, they can then draw up the final costume designs. The final designs are done in full-color and present the style, silhouette, textures, accessories and unique details of each costume.

Costume Design Activity

This theater lesson encourages children to be creative as they design costumes using recycled materials. Choose a fun seasonal theme for children to explore their own creativity.

Student Objective:

- Discover basic designing techniques
- Create a theatrical costume.
- Utilize imagination for expressing individuality
- Encourage social skills while working with others

Ideas for materials:

- Egg cartons
- Brown craft paper
- Toilet paper and paper towel rolls
- Images of theatre costumes
- String
- Newspaper
- Markers
- Pencils to sketch
- Paint
- Soda cans
- Various music CDs
- scissors
- Stapler and staples
- Instructions:
- Give children a brief introduction of theatre costumes (this could be a separate lesson prepared as theatre history lectures using the names of famous costume designers like Bakst, Poiret, Chagall...).
- Divide students into groups of 4 to 10.
- Introduce the theme. Students are then asked to imagine, invent and sketch some costume designs.
- In designing their costumes, students have to consider the technical possibilities, such as how to join the materials together; how to prepare a functional pattern; how to make it expressive and unique.
- Groups will then create their costumes.
- The groups are then asked to pick out music to choreograph a short performance to go along with their costume. They must work together to discuss, find and present the best way to incorporate their costumes. A dress rehearsal will help, if time allows.
- Time intended for costume design depends on your group and the time available.

Creative Mask-Making

Mask making is a fun project for groups of all ages--it can be simple enough for third graders, or even more elaborate for advanced artists. The basic shape is molded with plaster bandages right over the model's face, depending on what areas they would like to include. The mask can be a full-face mask, or a half-mask covering just the eyes and nose.

List of supplies for a basic plaster mask:

- Plaster bandage. This can be bought in a roll from a craft store, or a medical supply store (yes, it's the same stuff used for casting broken bones!)
- Petroleum jelly
- Bucket of water

- Straws, cut into 3-4 inch lengths
- Newspaper or plastic to protect the work surface
- Newspaper or paper towels to wad into supports for drying mask
- String to hang it with or ribbon to use as tie
- Art smock to protect clothing

Decorating ideas:

- Actual make-up
- Paints, markers, or color crayons
- Sequins, beads, glitter, or other embellishments
- Dried flowers or leaves
- Feathers
- Gloss varnish to seal mask and decorations
- Glue, or hot glue gun and glue sticks

Instructions:

- Cut the plaster bandages into strips suitable for the size of the model's face; 2"-4" lengths usually work.
- Cover the face of the "model" with petroleum jelly, especially at the hairline and eyebrows and eyelashes.
- Put pieces of the straws into nostrils to serve as "breathing tubes"
- Dip the bandage strips into the water, gently remove excess water, and begin to cover the model's face. The bridge of the nose is a good place to begin; work from there out to cover all areas of the face. Do not go too far under the chin, or the mask will be hard to remove after it's dry.
- As you work, smooth any rough bandage edges with your wet fingers.
- Once the face is covered, let it dry for about ten minutes before you try to remove it.
- When the model feels the mask begin to dry, they can make the removal process easier by wiggling their face. Scrunching up cheeks, frowning, smiling, scowling, lifting eyebrows--any facial movement will help to release the mask.
- Remove the mask by carefully lifting it at the outer edges. It will be drying, but not yet firm, so place it on a flat surface, supported by a "cushion" of crumpled paper towels or newspaper as it continues to dry. You can use more plaster to build up the edges or smooth any roughness at lip or eye openings at this point.
- While it is still damp, poke holes about an inch in from each edge, in line with the eyes, to run the ribbon or string through.
- When the mask is completely dry, it can be sanded with fine sandpaper or emery boards to create an artistic surface.
- If you want to decorate your mask with paints, feathers, beads, or natural finds (leaves or dried flowers) protect it with varnish or a gloss finish. Mod podge works great to help seal it all together!
- From here, let your imagination go wild and have fun!

Scenic Designers

Scenic designers have an important role in making a theatrical production successful. If unfamiliar with the story line, a lot of research and background work goes into the development of every set. The stage and props designed must be accurate according to the time period and situation the production is representing. The “stage picture” as it is called, should express good principles of design and use of space. It should be visually appealing for the audience or should express the show's concept. The stage picture is also crucial for the creation of atmosphere for the audience. Once the designer develops the ideas, he/she must translate them into a real set by creating many sketches and miniature models.

Scenic Design Activity

What you will need:

- Large cardboard or foam board pieces
- Tempera or Acrylic paint
- Paint brushes
- Paper and pencil for sketching
- Water (for cleaning brushes)
- Colored construction paper
- Any other decorative materials for props, such as fabric, string, cotton, dried leaves .

Instructions:

- Choose a favorite children's story to read to your class (my favorites are *Alice in Wonderland* and *Charlotte's Web!*)
- Ask the children what some of their favorite parts of the book are and they think it would look like. What type of feelings or mood does it create?
- Divide the class into groups of 4 and assign them each a portion from the book to design a set for.
- Have them collaborate together on how to establish the design, and encourage them to sketch out their ideas.
- Allow each group a large piece of cardboard or foam board (the bigger the better!) for them to paint a large scenic background. Have them decide who will be in charge of what.
- Once the background is complete, other items may be added to create dimension to the set.
- If time allows, have each group do a short presentation with the beautiful scenic background and props!

Color Psychology—Matching Game

1. Yellow_____

a. This color is traditionally worn in times of grieving, but also depicts authority and power.

2. Red_____

b. Brides wear this color to symbolize innocence and purity. Doctors and nurses wear white to imply sterility.

3. Brown_____

c. This color is the most emotionally intense and stimulates a faster heartbeat and breathing. It also increases your appetite, hence why many restaurant interiors are painted this color.

4. White_____

d. Known as a very romantic color, but can also make one feel tired. Sports teams sometimes paint the locker rooms used by opposing teams bright pink so their opponents will lose energy.

5. Pink_____

e. It causes the opposite reaction as red. It is peaceful and tranquil, allowing the body to produce calming chemicals. It can also be cold and depressing.

6. Black_____

f. This color is the easiest on the eye and can improve vision. Many hospital rooms are painted this color for its calming and relaxing effect.

7. Purple_____

g. Many view this color as bright and cheery, however, people lose their tempers more often in this color room. It is the most difficult color for the eye to take in, so it can be overpowering if overused. It also enhances concentration, hence its use for legal pads. It also speeds metabolism.

8. Blue_____

h. The color of royalty, it depicts luxury, wealth, and sophistication. It is also feminine and romantic.

9. Green_____

i. This is the color of earth and also abundant in nature. Can imply genuineness, but can also be sad and wistful.

Colorful Cultures

It is highly important for the production team to accurately depict the cultural backgrounds

Answers: 1-g; 2-c; 3-l; 4-b; 5-d; 6-a; 7-h; 8-e; 9-f.

cultural significance it has!

Red

- Ancient Egyptians considered themselves a red race and painted their bodies with red dye for prominence.
- In Russia, red portrays beauty. The Bolsheviks used a red flag as their symbol when they overthrew the tsar in 1917. That is how red became the color of communism.
- In India, red is the symbol for a soldier.
- In Greece, eggs are dyed red on Easter for good luck..
- In South Africa, red is the color of mourning.
- In China, red is the color of good luck and is used as a holiday and wedding color. Chinese babies are given their names at a red-egg ceremony.
- To “paint the town red” is an expression of celebration.
- Red is the color most commonly found in national flags.
- The “Redshirts” were the soldiers of the Italian leader Garibaldi, who unified modern Italy in the nineteenth century.
- To “see red” is to be angry.

Green

- Ancient Egyptians colored the floors of their temples green.
- In ancient Greece, green symbolized victory.
- Green is the national color of Ireland.
- A “greenback” is slang for a U.S. dollar bill.
- The green room of a concert hall or theater is where performers relax before going onstage.
- The “green-eyed monster” is jealousy.
- A greenhorn is a newcomer or unsophisticated person.
- Green symbolizes youth.
- Being “green around the gills” is looking pale and sickly.
- “Green with envy” means full of envy or jealousy.
- A person with a “green thumb” is good at making plants grow.
- Green is a healing color, the color of nature. To “go green” is to be conscious of the environment and help protect the earth.

Blue

- In ancient Rome, public servants wore blue, much like today, police and other public servants wear blue.
- Blue is the color of mourning in Iran.
- If you are “true blue,” you are trustworthy and faithful.
- A bride is said to wear something blue on her wedding day for good luck and a symbol of love.
- A room painted blue is said to decrease one’s appetite, as it may resemble spoiled food.
- “Feeling blue” is feeling sad. “Blue devils” are feelings of depression.
- A bluebook is a list of socially prominent people.
- A blue blood is a person of noble descent. This is probably from the blue veins of the fair-complexioned aristocrats who first used this term.
- “Into the blue” means into the unknown.
- A “bluenose” is a strict, puritanical person.
- A “bluestocking” used to be a scholarly or highly knowledgeable woman.
- The pharaohs of ancient Egypt wore blue for protection against evil.
- The “blues” is a style of music derived from southern African-American secular songs. Many sang “the blues” for expressing feelings of negativity or depression.

- “Blue laws” are used to enforce strict moral standards, such as the observance of Sunday as a day of worship or rest, and the restriction of Sunday shopping.

Purple

- In Thailand, widows wear purple while mourning her husband's death.
- A “purple heart” is a U.S. military symbol for soldiers wounded or killed in battle.
- “Purple speech” is offensive talk.
- “Purple prose” is writing that is full of exaggerated literary effects and ornamentation.
- Leonardo da Vinci believed that the power of meditation increased by 10 times when done in a purple light, as in the purple light of stained glass.
- According to color theory, purple in a child's room is said to help develop creativity and imagination.
- Richard Wagner used shades of purple as his color inspiration while composing operas.

Yellow

- In Egypt and Burma, yellow signifies mourning.
- In Spain, executioners once wore yellow.
- In tenth-century France, the doors of traitors and criminals were painted yellow.
- Hindus in India wear yellow to celebrate the festival of spring.
- If someone is said to have a “yellow streak,” that person is considered a coward.
- In Japan during the War of Dynasty in 1357, each warrior wore a yellow chrysanthemum as a pledge of courage.
- A yellow ribbon is a sign of support for soldiers at the front.
- Yellow is a symbol of jealousy and deceit.
- In the Middle Ages, actors portraying the dead in a play wore yellow.
- To holistic healers, yellow is the color of peace.
- Yellow has good visibility and is often used as a color of warning. It is also a symbol for quarantine, an area marked off because of danger.

White

- White is worn during mourning in China and Japan.
- The ancient Greeks wore white to bed because it was believed to give pleasant dreams.
- A “white elephant” is a rare, light-colored elephant believed to be sacred to the people of India, Thailand, Burma, and Sri Lanka. This term in the United States and Canada refers to a gift whose cost exceeds its usefulness. “White elephant” gifts tend to cost more than it is worth to keep or is an item that the owner doesn't want but can't get rid of.
- A white list contains favored items; in contrast to a blacklist.
- A “whiteout” occurs when there is zero visibility during a blizzard.
- A “white sale” is a sale of sheets, towels, and other bed and bath items.

Black

- The ancient Egyptians and Romans used black for mourning, as do most Europeans and Americans today.
- The “Blackshirts” were the security troops in Hitler's German army, also known as the S.S.

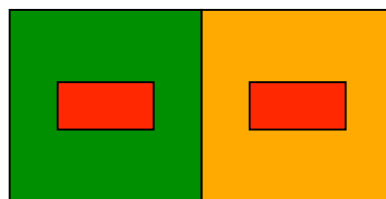
- Black often stands for secrecy.
- A “blackhearted” person is evil.
- If a business is “in the black,” it is making money.
- A “blacklist” is a list of persons or organizations to be boycotted or punished.
- Black is associated with sophistication and elegance, such as a “black tie” event, which is very formal.
- A black belt in karate identifies an expert.
- The ancient Egyptians believed that black cats had divine powers. In Western tradition, black cats have often been viewed as a symbol of evil.
- Blackmail is getting things by threat.
- Black market is illegal trade in goods or money.
- A black sheep is an outcast in a family.
- A blackout is a period of darkness from the loss of electricity, for protection against nighttime air raids, or, in the theater, to separate scenes in a play.
- To “black out,” means to temporarily lose consciousness.

Color

Set design, costume design, and lighting are very important separately, but when creating an opera the colors of each item need to create harmony together. There are many options for the use of color in set and costume designs and it all begins with a color wheel, a simple organization of color developed by Sr. Isaac Newton.

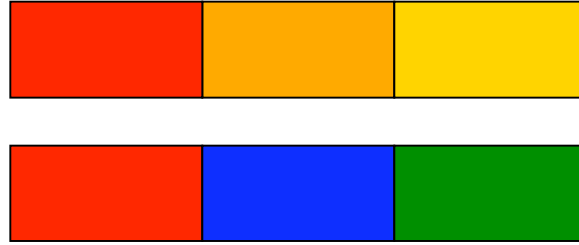


A **complementary color scheme** uses two colors that are on opposite sides of the color wheel. Choosing colors that have maximum contrast allows for a stable set and costume design. In a complementary color scheme the set design and costume will not blend together and you don’t lose either one of the objects.



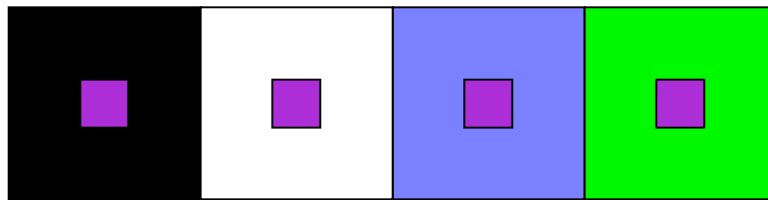
Which set design color would you choose for a complementary color scheme?

Using colors that are next to each other on the color wheel creates an **analogous color scheme**. Generally one of these three colors predominates. This way the three colors are not competing against one another.



Which colors would you choose for an analogous color scheme?

Color Context is also important when creating costume and set designs. Compare how the purple color changes depending on what color is behind it.



Purple appears more brilliant against a black background and somewhat dull against the white background. Purple blends with the blue; in contrast with green, it exhibits brilliance.