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978-0-521-61232-6 - The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography

Joslin McKinney and Philip Butterworth

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*The Cambridge Introduction to  
Scenography*

Scenography – the manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment – is an increasingly popular and key area in performance studies. This book introduces the reader to the purpose, identity and scope of scenography and its theories and concepts. Settings and structures, light, projected images, sound, costumes and props are considered in relation to performing bodies, text, space and the role of the audience. Concentrating on scenographic developments in the twentieth century, the *Introduction* examines how these continue to evolve in the twenty-first century. Scenographic principles are clearly explained through practical examples and their theoretical context. Although acknowledging the many different ways in which design shapes the creation of scenography, the book is not exclusively concerned with the role of the theatre designer. In order to map out the wider territory and potential of scenography, the theories of pioneering scenographers are discussed alongside the work of directors, writers and visual artists.

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*For*

*Rob and Robbie*

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## *Preface*

The aim of this book is to introduce the reader to the purpose, identity and scope of scenography and the theories and concepts which provide a critical framework within which it may be discussed. The work concentrates on scenographic developments in the twentieth century and considers how these continue to evolve in the twenty-first century. Scenographic principles are explained through practical examples and their theoretical context.

Although there are many instances which illuminate different ways in which design shapes the creation of scenography, the book is not exclusively concerned with the role of the theatre designer. In order to map out the wider territory and potential of scenography the work discusses the practice and theory of pioneering scenographers together with the work of directors, writers and visual artists.

Scenography is located as an emergent academic discipline through provision of a conceptual framework for consideration as performance practice and modes of communication with audiences.

The book is intended to be of principal value to university students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, who study theatre and performance. It provides conceptual tools to analyse and discuss scenographic aspects of these disciplines.

In *Part 1, Elements*, Chapter 1 discusses definitions of the term scenography and its relation to other aspects of the theatrical event. It identifies key elements in scenography. Chapter 2 extends understanding of these elements by discussing the practice and principles of key scenographic innovators in the twentieth century.

*Part 2, Processes of Scenography*, examines issues and concerns of scenography from three perspectives: text, space and technology. These concerns are identified as key drivers in the development of scenographic thinking. Chapter 3 examines the relationship between image and text. How does scenography arise in response to the theatrical text? How does scenography provide contemporary perspectives on classic texts? Chapter 4 asks: What are the basic characteristics of performance space? How can scenography best make use of spatial features?

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How do scenographers use space and time to develop their work? How does space shape audience experience? Chapter 5 deals with such questions as: How does scenographic practice make use of stage technology? How is the incorporation of technology part of the dramaturgical impetus and intention? What is the scenographic relationship between technological interventions and the performer?

In *Part 3, Realisation and Reception*, Chapter 6 considers ways of analysing scenography. It demonstrates approaches that have been developed for the production of theatre and suggests other perspectives that are helpful in identifying and discussing particular characteristics of the scenographic. Chapter 7 discusses ways in which audiences experience the scenographic dimension of performance. Chapter 8 concludes the work by examining the potential for scenographic images to reach audiences in ways that are significant and resonant. It draws on new research to reflect upon the extent to which audiences can be said to be collaborators in the realisation and perception of scenography.

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