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Creating a World for "As You Like It"

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Creating a World for "As You Like It"

Abstract
Before proceeding, I want to break down how this discussion will be structured. This is the introductory portion of my thesis. Its purpose is to introduce some of the topics that this paper will address, and it has done that. It will also frame the paper for the reader. What will follow this introduction is a short section on past productions of As You Like It, both professional, and from my personal life, so that the reader can understand why my design of As You Like It is unique. Then I will discuss why my design is appropriate to the play, using some scholarly work on both Abstract Expressionism and the play itself to justify the marriage of the two. Finally, once all of this groundwork has been laid, I will describe the journey I went through: from being awarded a thesis, to writing this paper, and all of the things I learned along the way.

Keywords
Schlatter, Whinnery, Kamine, Theatre Arts, Shakespeare, Design, Set, Lighting, Theater, James, James Schlatter

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Creating a World for As You Like It
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of a Senior Honors Thesis in Design

Benjamin Haber Kamine
July 7, 2006
Advisors: Dr. James F. Schlatter
Peter Whinnery
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As You Like It

CAST

Duke Senior ~ Caleb Liu
Duke Frederick/William ~ Boris Fedorov
Amiens ~ Rachel Gordon
Jacques ~ Matt Rosenbaum
LeBeau/Hymen ~ Brooke Palmieri
Charles ~ Austen Helfrich
Oliver ~ Gabriel Crane
Orlando ~ Jim Miles-Polka
Adam ~ Sloan Warren
Touchstone ~ Jeffrey Martinez
Lord James/Corin ~ Karl Wellman, Jr.
Silvius ~ Robert Jakobi
Rosalind ~ Elena Grill
Celia ~ Katie Foster
Phebe ~ Alex Buder Shapiro
Audrey ~ Katie Kuhl
PRODUCTION STAFF & CREW

Director ~ James F. Schlatter
Technical Director ~ Stephen Hungerford
Set & Lighting Design Advisor ~ Peter Whinnery
Set & Lighting Designer ~ Benjamin Haber Kamine
Costume Designer ~ Jason Reminick
Assistant Director/Properties ~ Khushboo Modi
Stage Manager ~ Genna Erlikhman
Music Composer ~ Karl Wellman, Jr.
Fight Choreographer ~ Brian McCann
Light Board Operator ~ Meredith Weber
Sound Board Operator ~ Jawan Scott
I. Introduction

Jeremy Cohen’s jazzy rendition of Dvorak’s Humoresque faded out on the speakers while I watched a thick strand of black paint pour off my Home Depot paint stick and drag across the test canvas. This was not painting the way I had watched Ed Harris do it in Pollock. I had rented the movie a few days earlier to learn how Jackson Pollock filled his canvasses, but stiff brushes weren’t available, and besides, I wanted to discover the art on my own. I began to lose track of time. The music faded into the background. I was only cursorily aware of Stephen Hungerford, the Theatre Arts Program’s Technical Director, painting a few feet away from me. And any sense of the Front Row Theatre Company teching Equus in the Prince Theatre next door was nonexistent. It was just me, the paint, and the canvas.

Then came the yellow. The yellow was thinner than the other paints. And for this reason, thick strands of paint were replaced by spattered drops. By holding the paint stick closer to the canvas, I could get thin strands to appear. Then I tried spattering intentionally. The joy of experimenting with the thin paint returned me to the trance that the difficulty had momentarily jolted me out of. Soon the canvas was filled with yellow lines and dots. It would be impossible for me to explain, but I could sense when I was done. Any less paint would have been barren. Any more paint would have been cluttered. Dominant lines began to form with the other colors. This was painting the way Pollock did it – if not in mechanics, then certainly in spirit.
I had intended to do a thesis with the Theatre Arts Program from the moment I declared my major. At the time I did not know what kind of thesis it would be, and over my years as a major, I would consider many different options, but the opportunity of doing advanced study in some facet of theatre seemed too good an opportunity to pass up. I set about my practicum requirements immediately. For all of the Program’s productions that I would be involved in, I would work on the lighting. I started with lighting because the first design course I took was THAR 131: Concepts of Lighting, taught by Professor Whinnery. I enjoyed it a great deal, and wanted to put the skills I had acquired in that class to a practical test. I was the Lighting Designer on two productions prior to As You Like It, and did Electrics Crew for the remainder of my practicum hours. I learned a lot on those productions that I would find very useful in my design work for As You Like It.

_Trojan Women: A Love Story_, co-directed by Theatre Arts Faculty members Dr. Marcia Ferguson and Dr. James Schlatter, was my first lighting design. As such, and also due to the limitations of the University Museum, where the production was staged, the plot was very simple. There were no specials, save a few spotlights that were manually operated, and the plot itself contained 23 instruments. This simplicity gave me limited variety for cuing, but given my inexperience, this limitation was welcome.

The found space, a courtyard in the University Museum, was large. Unfortunately, there were also very few circuits available for plugging in portable
dimmer packs. Trial and error allowed me to connect four packs which, at four dimmers each, provided a total of sixteen dimmers at my disposal. The angles of the space coupled with its size and an L-shaped audience arrangement led to a Stanley McCandless key-fill design. Because the audience was L-shaped, there were only two convenient places for me to put lighting trees, and limited dimmers meant that to cover a space that large I had very little area control. I focused on coverage over versatility. I ended up with trees that held sixteen Parnels each, and looked more like stadium lights than traditional theatre lighting. This arrangement afforded me four large lighting areas that were poorly defined but well-lit. That was the tradeoff I had to make.

In addition, I noted in rehearsal that the play had numerous choral dance sequences. In an effort to define those sequences by highlighting the dancing bodies with saturated color, I placed a boom at the junction of the L-shape and a boom at the end of one edge. These booms had saturated red (R26), saturated blue (R80), and saturated green (R91) gels, which I used in varying combinations and intensities during various dances. I also used these booms in my very first linked cue, flashing each color in time with the music. The twenty-third instrument in the plot was a Fresnel that highlighted a tree in the garden for an eerie effect consistent with the horrors of war.

My first experience light designing a show taught me about the variety I could get from very few instruments and some careful cuing, as well as the value of low light sources for highlighting bodies in interesting ways. These are things I would take with me into As You Like It. I didn’t even use all of the dimmers in the
Kamine

Studio for *As You Like It*, which is very unusual for designers in that space. I have come to appreciate and even prefer simple plots that do a lot over complicated plots with lots of specials. The simplicity allows me to focus on the design instead of the technology. I would find out how difficult manipulating a special-laden plot could be in my next lighting design.

*Deep Sleep*, directed by Theatre Arts faculty member Dr. Rose Malague, was a very complicated production. The Prince Theatre was set up in a tennis court configuration, and there was no house plot for such an audience arrangement. I had to begin entirely from scratch. Add to this the complication of keeping my lights from washing out multiple video screens, a nonrealistic storyline, and an extraordinary number of specials, and the resulting challenge pushed me to the limits of my ability.

Because the Prince stage is enormous, far larger than the found space at the University Museum, it would be expected that covering it in a wash of light would be a proportionally larger challenge. However, because the Prince dimmer system is one of the best at Penn, the number of dimmers available to me wasn’t even really a consideration. If the *Trojan Women* plot had been a story of limitations, the *Deep Sleep* plot was a story of excesses. Due to nonrealistic nature of the play, I employed at least ten specials, all with saturated colors from various parts of the rainbow. I even used fuchsia. These colors emphasized the dream-like nature of the piece, both in its dialogue and in its action.
While a plot that large had many benefits, it also had an unpleasant number of difficulties. Troubleshooting a plot of over sixty instruments is very time consuming, and cuing can take forever. I found that the time I lost making such a large plot work was not redeemed by the options such a large plot afforded me. I swore never again. The plot of As You Like It falls squarely between the simplicity of Trojan Women and the staggering complexity of Deep Sleep.

With these two designs under my belt, I still had not designed a traditional proscenium-style stage. And, with the exception of a few extracurricular theatre shows, I had done no scenic design outside of my coursework. It was with this lack of experience that I plunged head-first into a design thesis. I felt competent to face the difficulties of the tasks that lay ahead, but nervous about how my inexperience would play its way into the design process.

I felt confident in my abilities because, despite not discovering my love of theatrical design until my college career, I had made up for the lost time. I took, in order, THAR 131: Concepts of Lighting, THAR 132: Costume Design, and THAR 133: Concepts of Stage Design. Each of these classes provided me with important tools to help me with design challenges, but the most important thing that any of these classes did was teach me to think like a designer.

Concepts of Lighting was my first experience with real theatrical design. Prior to taking that class, I had done much in the way of set construction, even building an entire cabin for a stage production of Tom Stoppard’s Indian Ink, but
as Professor Whinnery would teach me, the divide between technician and designer is a chasm.

I aggressively absorbed the course. For possibly the only time in my college career, I read every word of the assigned texts. I had discovered a completely new realm in the world of theatre, and it was every bit as artistic and vibrant as performing was. If this sounds romantic, it is. While I did learn to approach design intellectually through a rigorous process of analysis and implementation, my way into the world of design was by falling in love.

Her name was Jean Rosenthal, and she had been a lighting designer for the likes of John Houseman and Martha Graham. Jean’s autobiographical book, *The Magic of Light*, is a seminal work on the history and art of lighting design. It was required reading for Concepts of Lighting. I enjoyed every chapter, reading about how Jean pioneered the field of lighting design, forcing theatre professionals around the world to consider lighting to be the domain of an artist, not an electrician. Although she died almost fifteen years before I was born, Jean Rosenthal became one of my best friends. She made lighting exciting and passionate. Once I understood that, I was ready to think about it as a process.

The most essential thing I learned about design from Professor Whinnery was something he reinforced in both Concepts of Lighting and Concepts of Stage Design: the rigor of the process. One of the first documents he provided us in both classes was a copy of J. Michael Gillette’s Design Process Checklist, which sets out six steps to completing a design of any kind:

- **Commitment**
1. Make a commitment to yourself to do your best work on the project
2. Overcome any negative feelings towards the project

**Analysis**
1. Gather information to clarify and refine the definition of the challenge.
2. Identify areas needing further research
3. Read the play
4. Talk to other members of the design team

**Research**
1. Background Research
   1. Study the social and artistic history of the period of the play
   2. Study all the trends and styles of architecture, lighting fixtures, and the like for the period
2. Conceptual Research
   1. Be a mental pack rat. Think up as many potential solutions to the challenge as possible.
   2. Don't judge or discard any idea. Save them all.

**Incubation**
1. Just forget about the project. Do something else.
2. Allow enough time for your subconscious mind to work on the challenge.

**Implementation**
1. Stop thinking and start doing
2. Produce all the necessary drawings, sketches, and plans to facilitate the realization of the design.
3. Hang, focus and run the show. Do your part, whether it be costumes, lighting, scenery, make-up, wigs, props, or ... just do it!

**Evaluation**
1. Reflect on the challenge. Did you do everything you could to make it succeed?
2. Review your use of the design process. Did you fully analyze the question? Did you do sufficient background and conceptual research?
3. Did you effectively communicate your ideas and thoughts to the other members of the design team? ¹

Armed with this understanding of what was needed, based on the Design Process Checklist, and an education in scenic and lighting design, I was ready to

<http://pacshop.dca.net/private/133/Classnotes/intro.html>.
tackle a design thesis. I began, before my application, with the first step of any design process: Commitment. Based on advice from Professor Schlatter, I committed to taking on no extracurricular theatrical activities if I was to be awarded a thesis. The thesis would be my complete focus.

It was time to apply for a thesis. In my thesis application, I acknowledged that, “Although I am interested in directing, as well, the prospect of taking my education in design to the next level is too tempting an option to pass up.” I have always been fascinated by the visual design of theatrical productions. My clearest memories of theatre as a child are not of individual performances, but the visuals used to communicate the story, from the dense forest in *Where the Wild Things Are* to the suburban neighborhood of *How to Eat Fried Worms*. My romance with Jean Rosenthal notwithstanding, the bulk of my extracurricular theatre work has been in directing theatre. I do enjoy directing. But my imagination was seized by the prospect of all that I could learn from a design thesis. I had heard that Professor Schlatter was likely to direct the fall production, which was when I wanted the practical work of my thesis to be. Both my coursework with Professor Whinnery and my past design experience with Professor Schlatter (*Trojan Women*) led me to expect that a design thesis under these circumstances would be an exceptionally rewarding educational opportunity. And it was.

I first considered proposing a thesis at the end of my junior year. I wanted to experiment with the creation of new design tools as part of a joint thesis project with the Computer and Information Science Department. I eventually
abandoned that idea, wanting to pursue more course work before attempting a project that would culminate my Penn theatrical education. I did my Computer Science thesis on educational software instead, and patiently waited for the end of my fourth year (my dual-degree program is five years) to propose the thesis that I was eventually awarded.

Before proceeding, I want to break down how this discussion will be structured. This is the introductory portion of my thesis. Its purpose is to introduce some of the topics that this paper will address, and it has done that. It will also frame the paper for the reader. What will follow this introduction is a short section on past productions of *As You Like It*, both professional, and from my personal life, so that the reader can understand why my design of *As You Like It* is unique. Then I will discuss why my design is appropriate to the play, using some scholarly work on both Abstract Expressionism and the play itself to justify the marriage of the two. Finally, once all of this groundwork has been laid, I will describe the journey I went through: from being awarded a thesis, to writing this paper, and all of the things I learned along the way.
II. Past Productions

I have had two sets of encounters with As You Like It in my life. The first set is past professional productions that I have researched over the years. The second set is productions of the play that I have been directly involved in. Both sets have influenced my understanding of the play and my visual imagination for the way it ought to be staged and set.

As You Like It has appeared on New York stages more times than can be mentioned or discussed. However, I am choosing to focus on a few specific productions that highlight a variety of designs and demonstrate the scope of visual interpretations this play has been subjected to.

In 1937, the Surry Players, an American company that included the likes of Anne Revere, Shepperd Strudwick, and Katherine Emery, brought As You Like It to Broadway. Brooks Atkinson commented on the scenery in his New York Times review of the production: “The tapestried scenery, with a Maxfield Parrish motif in the forest scenes, is light and gay.”2 The production featured beautifully-painted representational scenery. Representational scenery again appeared in the 1941 Broadway production of As You Like It. As Brooks Atkinson observed, “the Forest of Arden, where a few gaunt trees and shimmering leaves do very
nicely. But it was not until Donald Wolfit and his London Company brought \textit{As You Like It} to Broadway in 1947 (it is interesting to note that Wolfit played Touchstone rather than Orlando or Jaques) that representational scenery was replaced by, “a series of gaily-painted panels that can be changed in the true fashion of a masque.”

1950 saw Katharine Hepburn play Rosalind on Broadway, and both she and the return of representational scenery were met with unkind remarks from the critics. The production was practically naturalistic, and Atkinson cuttingly remarked that the production staff, “Heroically holding themselves in check, … refrained from bringing the lioness onstage.” Atkinson went on to argue, \textit{“As You Like It} was written for a stage without representational scenery.” Unfortunately, the pendulum shift away from representational scenic designs for productions of this play was short-lived. The next Broadway production of \textit{As You Like It}, done in 1974, again saw a setting that was described by Clive Barnes as “sylvan.”

According to the Lortel Archives, the New York Shakespeare Festival did \textit{As You Like It} for the first time in 1957. This was the first Off-Broadway production of the play. George C. Scott played Jaques and the show ran for a month. Joseph Papp, however, did not direct the play himself until the summer

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of 1973 when the play was done for the first time at the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park. The Delacorte is an open-air theatre. Audiences entering the theatre would have legitimately felt as though they were entering a haven in the middle of Arden. Clive Barnes practically says as much when he notes that the “verdant setting which seems virtually to wrap itself around the open-air stage … is undeniably agreeable and imaginative.”

Once again we find a production of *As You Like It* bound up in realistic depictions of greenery.

The most interesting scenic design that I came across was a production directed and designed by Liviu Cioilei for an Off-Broadway theatre. The set was “a mostly bare stage covered with checkerboard linoleum.” Finally, a set that does not resemble the “painted pomp” of the court or the greenery of the forest!

The majority of these productions favor literal representation of the Forest of Arden over abstract representation. And where abstraction is tried, it is unclear, at least to the reviewer, why the abstraction is used. I still am unable to find a production of *As You Like It* that makes use of Abstract Expressionist painting and structures to tell the story of the play. This surprises me, since the connection seemed so obvious to us. As I will explain in the next chapter, Abstract Expressionism is thematically identical to many of the issues addressed by *As You Like It*.

Unfortunately, all of my experiences with *As You Like It* as a student also showed unimaginatively realistic sets. But I did learn a lot about the play as I

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explored it through these various experiences. The knowledge and understanding of the play gained by working with it as a student-actor would be a great help when I had to approach it as a designer.

My first experience with *As You Like It* was as a senior at Shalhevet High School in spring of 2001. The play, as we performed it, was heavily cut. In all, it ran just under two hours. Because this was my first experience with Shakespeare in performance, as with *Trojan Women: A Love Story*, a little bit of simplicity was a good thing. And the cuts simplified the text enough to allow me to ease into it. I played Touchstone. And, when the actor playing Duke Frederick dropped out three weeks before opening, I played that character, as well.

The set was elaborate, but somewhat literal. The play had been updated to the modern day, so the court was replaced by the corporate world, and the Forest of Arden was a national park. A thrust went into the audience, and the performance area extended up the center aisle to the back of the auditorium. The thrust and aisle were paved with Astroturf. At the back of the stage was a high wooden platform for court pronouncements and other such scenes. The scene change between forest and court was accomplished by large rotating panels. There were two, one stage right at the back of the stage, and one stage left. On one side, they were painted drably, but on the other there were enormous amounts of greenery bolted directly to the panel, and vibrant painted colors suggested an atmosphere in direct contrast to the court.
I would next encounter *As You Like It* as a sophomore at Penn in the Underground Shakespeare Fall Fortnight production. Again, I played Touchstone. This time the play was largely uncut, and for the first time, I was exposed to the play in its entirety. The set, however, was nonexistent. It was College Green. The Forest of Arden, with outdoor production, had now legitimately become a pastoral commons.

My final encounter with *As You Like It* prior to my thesis was with the British-American Drama Academy at Oxford during the summer of 2004. For my Shakespeare class, I did scene work on four scenes from the play. I played Charles in Act I, Scene 2; Jaques in Act III, Scene 2; Audrey in Act III, Scene 3; and Silvius in Act III, Scene 5. The set consisted of a collection of branches and leaves strewn throughout the room.

This was the first time that I was forced to think of the play in a global sense. By looking at it through the lenses of many different characters, I developed a broader understanding of the world of *As You Like It*. The characters of the play could be divided among members of the court, denizens of the forest, and characters that attempt to bridge the gap. Touchstone is of the last category. By playing Touchstone exclusively, I had never been forced to consider the parts of the story that deal with characters who only exist in the world of the court, like Charles the wrestler, or characters who only exist in the forest, like Silvius. And I certainly had not thought about the play from the perspective of someone who is not a lover, and even ridicules the very thing! By considering all of these perspectives, my understanding of the world these
characters inhabit was significantly more complete. The stage was set for me to design the show, as I had been sufficiently distanced from my “Touchstone lens.”

All of my work with As You Like It involved sets that were realistic, often with naturalistic elements. I began to conceive of the play only in terms of these lush surroundings. That is what made my thesis production of As You Like It such a big departure for me. When Professor Schlatter asked me to conceive a set that used Abstract Expressionist representations of the court and forest, I was forced to think about the play in a completely different way.
### III. Abstract Expressionism and As You Like It

Jackson Pollock was quoted in 1944 as saying that his art "came into existence because I had to paint it. Any attempt on my part to say something about it, to attempt explanation of the inexplicable, could only destroy it."\(^9\) Despite these cautionary words from the man whose style I tried to emulate, I am going to explain the connection I perceived between the style of painting and sculpture generally referred to as Abstract Expressionism and As You Like It. Abstract Expressionism meant many things to many different people, and while my study of it, and the work I did that connected it to As You Like It, referred primarily to the work of Jackson Pollock, there are hallmarks of the movement as a whole that I also find applicable to the play. To quote Pollock again, this was a movement about, "Energy and motion made visible – memories arrested in space."\(^10\) It is this energy and chaos that drive As You Like It and the underlying order of the play, which yearns to be, and ultimately is, restored.

As You Like It is a play with many dichotomies: court versus forest, jealous brother versus honorable brother, male versus female. Each of these dichotomies belies the underlying problem of the play: the interplay of order and disorder in human society. In this scenario, the court obviously represents the world of order and the forest the world of disorder, or chaos. These words are inadequate because of their negative connotations, so perhaps it is better to use

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\(^10\) Ibid. 121
the word liberation. Order versus liberation is the problem of the play. And while in some themes, this interplay is obvious, in others it is less so.

One of the main motifs of *As You Like It* is the crossing of gender. Rosalind, who in Shakespeare’s day would have been played by a young boy, is, as a young girl, pretending to be a young boy, who acts the part of a young girl in order to dissuade Orlando from his love. At first, it is unclear how this is encompassed in the idea of order and liberation. However, it is only by eschewing the approved social order and her position within it as a woman that Rosalind is able to find the freedom to accomplish all she needs to: securing the safety of herself and Celia, testing the love of Orlando, bringing peace to Silvius and Phebe, and reuniting with her father. Throughout the play, Rosalind acknowledges the benefits of manhood, but when it is time for order to be restored, she does not hesitate to resume her feminine role. This concept – that Rosalind needed to abandon the accepted order to achieve certain goals, but ultimately needed to return to it to live her life as she wanted it – is what drives the play. Indeed, all those who escape society by fleeing to the forest readily return to the court when their exile comes to an end. No one, save Jaques, implies that the liberation of the forest is preferable to the hierarchies of the court. The forest has served its purpose, and now it is time to go home.

This order-liberation dichotomy finds its way into the opposition of jealous brother and honorable brother, as well. There are two sets of brothers in *As You Like It*. In both sets, the honorable brother has something the jealous brother covets. And the jealous brother usurps his honorable brother to get it. For Duke
Frederick, it is Duke Senior’s dukedom. For Oliver, it is Orlando’s life he seeks to usurp. He tries to kill Orlando because everyone else likes Orlando and he hates him. As Oliver puts it in Act I, Scene 1, “My soul – yet I know not why – hates nothing more than he.”\textsuperscript{11} In both cases the usurping brother forces the other to flee order and society for the liberation of the forest, asserting the position of the jealous brother on the side of order.

In no art movement in America has this order-liberation dichotomy found so clear an expression as in Abstract Expressionism. For the sake of the literature on the subject, I will return to referring to the liberation side of things as chaos. Abstract Expressionism was practically defined by its chaos: “Never had painting been so far from the compositional hierarchies ... that go back to the Renaissance.”\textsuperscript{12} This was a world of vitality, the abandonment of order in favor of “energy and motion.” As B. H. Friedman formulates it,

No picture is more thoroughly abstract than a picture by Pollock: abstract from everything. Therefore, as a direct consequence, no picture is more automatic, involuntary, surrealistic, introverted and pure than a picture by Pollock. ... In any case it is easy to detect the following things in all of his paintings:
- chaos
- absolute lack of harmony
- complete lack of structural organization
- total absence of technique, however rudimentary
- once again, chaos\textsuperscript{13}

Most people looking at Pollock’s paintings see the beauty of his chaos. As articulated above, for most of the art establishment, Pollock’s paintings are

\textsuperscript{12} Anfam 130.
unique for precisely that reason. Pollock, though, charges a different sense to his work: “the painting has a life of its own. I try to let that come through.” For Pollock, there is an underlying order to the painting even if no one else can see it. Perhaps it is my engineer’s mind, but when I look at Pollock’s paintings, I do see a sense of order coming through the chaos.

In As You Like It, even in the forest, order preserves itself. The forest appears free, but Duke Senior is still accorded status, Rosalind still gets more as a boy than as a girl, and money is still used for transactions. As articulated by Corin in his argument with Touchstone in Act III, Scene 2, “Those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court.” The forest may be free, but there is still an order in it somewhere. It is the same sense of order within chaos that makes the forest and Pollock’s work so appealing. True chaos is troublesome, hence the negative connotations of the word. But ordered chaos is beautiful.

Pollock once said, “When I am in my painting, I’m not aware of what I’m doing.” The correlation between Abstract Expressionism and As You Like It was not just ideological, but also practical. The process of painting in the style of Pollock, as I described it at the beginning of this thesis, involves releasing yourself from the order of everyday life and finding liberation in just painting. But this liberation has a sense of order to it. There are still tools and boundaries. It

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14 Anfam 125.
15 Shakespeare 63.
16 Anfam 125.
is just not a sense of order associated with anything of this world in the normal ways we conceive it.
IV. Picking the Play

I was awarded my thesis on Monday, May 9, 2005. Within a week, I began working with Professor Schlatter and Professor Whinnery. We had our first meeting at eleven o’clock in the morning on Thursday, May 19. At that meeting we began discussing the logistics of the design thesis. At that stage, Professor Schlatter had not yet chosen a play to direct, so most of the conversation was oriented around what I was hoping to get out of the thesis production and what would be expected of me. At the time, I articulated an interest in a detailed, realistic set with naturalistic, motivated lighting. Obviously, that is not the direction we ended up heading in. In retrospect, while I would have enjoyed the detail-oriented work of a perfect period set, the experience of painting Pollock is something I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

We also discussed the nature of the work I would do. It was decided that I would do both set and lights for whatever production was settled upon. Because of the number of detailed drawings expected of me as part of my thesis work, my thesis would be shorter than the standard seventy-five pages asked of acting or directing candidates. With this preliminary discussion complete, I departed for summer break. Professor Schlatter and I continued to correspond over the break about play choices.

By mid-June, Professor Schlatter had detailed a very specific set of criteria: “1) Playwright name recognition; 2) Good balance of male and female roles; 3) Opportunity to do something theatrically (design wise) very
accomplished and ‘finished’”¹⁷ Using these criteria, the list of possible plays had been narrowed to *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare, *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, and *Ah, Wilderness* by Eugene O’Neill. I was in London at the time, where things are more expensive and I did not have a library card. Therefore, I did not have ready access to any of the plays.

Upon returning to the United States at the beginning of July, I procured copies of all four plays and promptly read them. In late July, I wrote Professor Schlatter a long email detailing my thoughts on each play.

**Our Town:**
A remarkably simple set, this show is dominated by hints of time and place that are largely given not by the set (which only suggests objects that are large enough that characters have to grapple with them), but by subtle lighting effects (like a sunrise, or the somber gloom of a graveyard) and offstage sounds. I don't know if I'm going to have anything to do with sound, but I suspect not.

**As You Like It:**
A play dominated by oppositions. Court versus Forest. Older Brother versus Younger Brother. Society versus Challenging Conventions. Simple realistic lighting, nothing overly dramatic. Time and place are firmly established by emphasizing the difference between the two settings the Forest (Dominion of the Younger Brothers and Challenging Conventions) and the Court (Dominion of the Older Brothers and Societal Order). Perhaps two complex sets that have minor changes to indicate where in the forest or where in the court one is.

**Arcadia:**
This is my favorite play design-wise, because it seems a hugely detail-oriented box set. No scene changes mean that all efforts can be devoted to a beautifully, fully researched early-nineteenth century room. In addition, the onstage

¹⁷ Schlatter, James. "Play for Fall." Email to the author. 21 June 2005.
juxtaposition of two different time periods lends itself to dramatic lighting. The whole thing is a huge design challenge that is simple enough in its requirements that it can be a great educational opportunity. (Not that all of these couldn't, but I'm a big fan of designing this show in particular)

Ah, Wilderness:
As texts go, this was my favorite play of the four, but I'm not even sure where to begin with designing it. It has so many different locations in it, but also seems to demand a realistic box set. I really need to talk to Peter about this one, I think, before I can even begin to tackle it.\(^{18}\)

Worth noting from this original analysis is that both in my discussion of \textit{Our Town} and in my discussion of \textit{Arcadia} there is a recognition of the lesson I learned in my early design experiences, that contrary to intuition, simplicity would be a boon in making this process educational. Complexity leads to sloppiness. This knowledge would ultimately lead to a very simple design for \textit{As You Like It}.

Other things worth noting are the early interest in a period set and the immediate recognition of dichotomies (here labeled oppositions) in \textit{As You Like It}. Finally, one of the lighting effects suggested in the \textit{Our Town} discussion, a sunrise, eventually made its way into \textit{As You Like It} as a sunset right before intermission. It is pictured here:

\(^{18}\) Kamine, Benjamin. "The Four Plays." E-mail to Dr. James Schlatter. 24 July 2005.
I arrived back in Philadelphia on July 31. After getting settled for new school year, I contacted Professor Schlatter about a scenic design meeting on August 2. After considering the arguments I had presented, along with a variety of other considerations, Professor Schlatter informed me on August 3 that we were going ahead with As You Like It. The play had been chosen!
V. Early Steps

The first design meeting that I had with Professor Schlatter was on August 5. He was very enthusiastic about some costume ideas that involved a sort of upper-crust Kennedyesque feel. He invited me to peruse back issues of “Town and Country” and catalogs for L.L. Bean and Eddie Bauer to get an idea of what he was talking about. We loosely discussed columns and trees as ways of defining court and forest, along with draperies and tents. We were in the “Research” portion of Gillette’s Design Process Checklist and moving at a rapid pace. We agreed to meet the following Thursday. By that meeting I would contact Professor Whinnery and sketch a few ideas.

I emailed Professor Whinnery as soon as that first meeting was over. I was very nervous about proceeding alone. Due to an unfortunate incident with Professor Whinnery’s mail filter, he did not receive my email, and I spent the next six days trying on my own to come up with ideas. I looked at pictures from several past productions of As You Like It, doing much of the production research included in Section II of this paper. I flipped through the catalogs. I tried sketching. But by Wednesday of the following week, and no word from Professor Whinnery, I felt like I was getting nowhere. I emailed Professor Schlatter to inform him of my lack of progress, and we proceeded with the meeting anyway.

At that meeting, we engaged the idea of Abstract Expressionism. It was an idea that had been toyed with at the meeting prior, but here was where it
began to take serious shape. Although I could certainly see the logic behind the concept, I had misgivings about the way it interfaced with the play and how capable I would be of achieving it. There was still more research to be done. By Friday, and still no word from Professor Whinnery, Professor Schlatter and I decided to skip meeting for the week so that I could collect my thoughts, incubate, and talk to Professor Whinnery when he replied, which he did, the following Friday. Professor Whinnery and I set a meeting for Tuesday, August 22.

By this point I was in a bit of a panic. I had been back at Penn for three weeks. In those three weeks, I had several meetings with Professor Schlatter, none with Professor Whinnery, and while the design was very quickly beginning to take shape, I wasn’t at all sure I would be able to implement it. I articulated these concerns to Professor Whinnery during our meeting, and his first suggestion was that I start building a model. I had already done a simple ground plan sketch in AutoCAD, so I just needed to build up from there. A model would clarify all sorts of physical and artistic problems, as well as give me an easy way of expressing the design before dealing with technical drawings. Professor Whinnery and I also discussed enrolling me in a drawing class. I enrolled in FNAR 123: Drawing I.

Our first production meeting, which included Professor Whinnery, Professor Schlatter, Stephen Hungerford, and student costume designer Jason Reminick, and me, was at eleven o’clock in the morning on Wednesday, September 7. At that first production meeting we rehashed for Jason and
Stephen some of the ideas that Professor Schlatter and I had been discussing over the previous five weeks. I presented my ground plan, which is pictured below, and announced that I was building a model. And we all decided on a weekly production meeting time of 10:30 A.M. every Monday morning.

The small boxes in the ground plan represent columns. The line connecting a pair of columns is a curtain, and there is a drop at the back of the stage. A rake had already been discussed at this point, and this ground plan has the dimensions of a rake that occupies the first row of audience in the Studio Theatre. The dotted vertical centerline is matched by a horizontal centerline.
because Professor Schlatter requested that the downstage half of the rake be empty playing space. I presented all of this at that production meeting.

Over the next few weeks, Professor Schlatter cast As You Like It, and I set about doing visual research for a model. I checked out books on Abstract Expressionism from the Fine Arts Library. I searched online. I brought all of the paintings I found to production meetings, and Professor Schlatter and I narrowed the scope of what we were looking for, until finally we settled on the spatter and drip-painting style of Jackson Pollock’s later work.

Once the style had been decided, there were discussions of palette. Because I was also the lighting designer, I wanted to layer the painting with different sets of colors, so that when I shined cool light on the set, it would look like the court, and when I shined warm light on it, it would look like the forest. We explored in depth the variety of reds, yellows, browns, greens, and blues that were possible. But what was really needed was some actual painting experience.

On the architectural front, the elements of the set were becoming fairly certain. There would be a colonnade of columns, to act as columns in the court and trees in the forest. The stage would be raked with a floor also painted in the Pollock style. At the back of the stage, there would be a hanging drop, also painted in the Pollock style, but possibly more closely resembling earlier Pollock, a sort of abstract extension of the colonnade into the distance, with sky surrounding it. And on the stage, the only pieces of furniture would be two raked chair-like pieces that could split in two and become fallen logs in the forest,
moved by the cast to denote changes in location. At this stage, there was also some discussion of hanging draperies, but that had not been cleared up yet.

Towards the end of September, I took this information and, using computer printouts of Pollock paintings and some supplies I bought at Utrecht Art Supplies, I assembled a rudimentary model. But this model failed to account for several problems that I would encounter in constructing and painting the set. As such, Professor Whinnery rejected it, and asked me to construct a model that I would paint myself. This was to be the beginning of what I consider to be the most rewarding and exciting part of my thesis production: learning to paint like Pollock.

For a scale this small (the model was 1/2” – 1’-0”), the model ended up having an extraordinary amount of practical purpose for me and many others involved in the show. Just the process of painting the model got me very excited about the prospect of painting that way on a larger scale. But the model also allowed us to reevaluate the size of the columns, the tops of the furniture, and the safety of very tall columns (they have to be secured at the top, as well as at the bottom to keep them from falling over). The model provided Professor Schlatter with a visual playground to move little men and set pieces around in. And the beauty of a completed and painted model excited the cast about the environment they were going to inhabit.

Using the model, I was able to do a detailed ground plan and calculate the sections of the furniture. These drawings are included in Appendix A. Stephen Hungerford and I began to communicate about building the set. He ordered the
muslin for the backdrop and the ground cloth (we decided that instead of painting directly on to the platforms of the rake, we would paint a ground cloth and stretch it over an already assembled stage). Professor Schlatter and I had discussed the rake thrusting into the audience. I insisted that, in order to make the space look professional, the only way to make a raked thrust work was to remove the first row of seats. Stephen agreed to do that. And Stephen and I began to discuss a painting schedule. Everything was going well.

Academics were a different story. As part of taking on a thesis, Professor Schlatter had insisted, and I had agreed, that I would not participate in any other shows for the semester. This lack of other commitments had emboldened me into registering for five classes and getting a job. My schedule was overwhelming. By the end of September, not only was I not getting enough sleep, but some of my schoolwork was beginning to suffer, particularly in Drawing I, the course that Professor Whinnery had strongly advised me to take in concert with my thesis work.

Professor Whinnery and I had discussed my taking Drawing I as a way of supplementing my thesis work because in the coursework that I had done for the design courses that I had taken, Professor Whinnery had notice a linearity of expression. All of my designs were very square, largely because I only expressed myself well as a designer while using computer design tools. I wasn’t comfortable drawing any of my designs freehand. It was Professor Whinnery’s hope that taking a drawing class could help me break through this right-brain block. But Drawing I was not doing that for me. I found the homework
assignments to be “useless, unconnected to class work, and extremely time-consuming.”¹⁹ In addition, I was getting very little personal feedback from my Drawing instructor, and was, therefore, not improving at all. I wanted to drop the class and pursue an independent study of drawing using a textbook that Professor Whinnery had once recommended to me, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* by Betty Edwards.

I approached Professor Whinnery about taking this course of action, and although understanding, he had misgivings about whether or not I would be diligent in my study of drawing without the regiment of regular coursework. Ultimately, however, he agreed. So I dropped Drawing I, and began to read *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain.*

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¹⁹ Kamine, Benjamin. "About Drawing I." E-mail to Peter Whinnery. 27 Sept. 2005.
VI. Implementing the Scenic Design

By the beginning of October, I had a three-dimensional AutoCAD drawing that could be imported into Radiance for more precise modeling. I emailed my AutoCAD drawing to Professor Whinnery who turned out a rough Radiance drawing, which is pictured here:

![Radiance drawing](image)

Even though a physical model gave a very good understanding of what the set would look like, it would take Radiance renderings to understand how that set would look under various colors of light. This was a tool I would need for my lighting design. And those design discussions would be happening soon.

By the time we headed into fall break in the middle of October, paint colors had been finalized, as well as the structures onstage. That there would be draperies was agreed upon, but as is evident from the Radiance rendering above, they had not yet been figured into the design. I would need to
go fabric hunting during Fall Break so that we could settle the drapery issue. I had been summoned for jury duty during Fall Break, but considering that both my parents are attorneys, and that fact had kept me off juries in the past, I considered the probability of getting assigned to a jury to be so small that it wasn’t worth planning around. That was a mistake.

Not only did I get assigned to a jury, but my trial went on for three days, consuming both Fall Break and the first day back from classes. Fortunately, I was able to use a lunch break to go fabric hunting, and brought three fabric swatches back from Fabric Row. But other than that, all that free time was gone.

Fabric Row is on 4th Street in South Philadelphia. Exploring it was fascinating. I knew going in that I wanted a sheer white fabric, but the availability of sheer white fabrics was astounding. I went from store to store in search of the perfect sheer. Each store owner tried to undercut the price of the one I had just spoken to. And, unbelievably in that competitive atmosphere, every store owner that didn’t have what I was looking for was more than happy to point me in the direction of someone who did. It was like being thrust back in time to some ancient marketplace. For the first time in my life, I was able to find what I wanted on my very first fabric shopping trip. (All the fabric shopping I had done for extracurricular theatre involved going to a Jomar and either settling for something slightly wrong, or piling into the car and going to another Jomar.) I brought back three sheer swatches that I thought were great. Professor Schlatter and I went over them at a production meeting and settled on the best option. It was a thicker fabric with an embroidered pattern of swirls.
On October 20, Stephen and I began to plan, in depth, our painting schedule. Although it would be another four days before we started on the test cloth, we planned out when we would paint each portion of the set. Stephen planned out his build schedule. And the build began.

On Monday, October 24, Stephen and I began painting the test cloth. We dripped two colors a night for three nights, finishing on Thursday. It was a transformative experience. Betty Edwards describes the transformation that artists undergo in *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, and I don't think I can explain it any better than she does:

> In that different subjective state, artists speak of feeling transported, "at one with the work," able to grasp relationships that they ordinarily cannot grasp. Awareness of the passage of time fades away and words recede from consciousness. Artists say that they feel alert and aware yet are relaxed and free of anxiety, experiencing a pleasurable, almost mystical activation of the mind.  

When people describe the way Pollock painted, they often note that he seemed unaware of anything else in the room but himself and his painting. I began to feel at one with the work. By this point I had let *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* fall aside. I had kept it up diligently for three weeks, but with the pressure of painting every night, I no longer had time for it. This was unfortunate, as there was still much I could have learned. However, when I started painting that test cloth, I broke free of the straight line. My drawing has improved substantially since then, even without the help of Betty Edwards' book.

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I tried to describe this watershed moment when I began this thesis, but because of its very nature, it defies words. This is the nature of R-mode thinking as Betty Edwards describes it. L-mode thinking is the kind of logical, verbal description that I am used to with my engineering degree and scientific approach to life. R-mode thinking is what I experienced when I began to paint. It is the difference between analysis and intuition, but also the difference between the rectilinear art that I had produced in previous design courses and the freehand that Professor Whinnery wanted me to explore in Drawing I. I found it in the painting.

Over the next week, I got more and more into the painting. Stephen and I finished the test cloth and showed it to Professor Schlatter. We all agreed that the ground cloth would have to be primed a specific color, and I decided after evaluating the test cloth to change the order of the paint layering. Stephen and I realized that in the interest of time we could probably lay down two different colors at once. And we primed the test cloth. On Monday, October 31, we would start to paint the actual set. I was very excited.

The ground cloth was primed a light brown. We laid it out in the backstage area of the Zellerbach Theatre and started to paint. It was a huge area: 18’ x 24’. With the test cloth, I could stand on the edge of the cloth and throw paint at it, but here I had to get in the painting. By the end of our first night of painting, it was clear that I had a pair of paint pants. They were old jeans with holes in them, but by that point they were so covered in paint that were they not already unwearable in most settings, they certainly were now. I began to walk
barefoot across the canvas while painting, and I relished my evening ritual of ending each painting session by washing my feet.

Professor Schlatter invited members of the cast to come help us paint, and I was grateful for all of the help, but my favorite time to paint was when it was just me. Stephen had to leave early one night of the painting. It was just me and the green. For an hour I filled the canvas with strands and spatters of green. I wouldn’t have known how long I was there, except an Annenberg Center security guard stopped me and said the building was closing.

The following week, Stephen and I primed the columns a light gray and primed the backdrop a light blue. Then I got the flu.

While the evenings of that spectacular week were spent painting, the mornings were occupied by all sorts of other work. There was lighting work done, but there was also a lot of exciting set stuff going on. On Monday morning, we had a production meeting during which we determined the tech week schedule. On Thursday morning, Stephen and I went back to Fabric Row and got a bolt of the fabric that Professor Schlatter and I had decided on. And on Friday morning, I got Stephen cross-sections of all the furniture that I needed built. The best morning achievement of the week, though, was that on Monday morning, before the production meeting, I settled on a backdrop image.

The backdrop of the set was to be a painting of an image of Pollock’s mural for Peggy Guggenheim that I had digitally edited, adding light blue and stretching and highlighting the image in interesting ways. With this many translations, it was guaranteed to be far removed from Pollock’s original painting,
but that was the idea. The image is presented here as I emailed it to Stephen that morning:

What I loved about the image is that it communicated exactly what I wanted it to. It represented for me an abstract colonnade of trees with a foggy sky behind them. And, most importantly, it brought another part of me into the art: the computer scientist. Any skill I had in digitally editing images came from the computer intuition I had developed in my engineering degree. I was very proud of using skills I had acquired in another major to aid my academic pursuits in this one. That kind of cross-fertilization is what being a dual degree student is all about.
In retrospect, given that I was burning the candles at both ends of the day, I suppose it is unsurprising that I got sick the following week. Usually my body gives up on me in circumstances like that. It won’t let me overwork it to that extent. But I was so excited about my thesis and the way it was going that I guess none of that became clear until it was too late. And unfortunately, because the set had been so time consuming, the arrival of the flu was very ominous for my lighting design.
VII. Lighting Design from Bed and Other Tricks

The lighting designer uses light to achieve four primary goals: (1) to influence the audience’s perception and understanding of what they’re seeing; (2) to selectively illuminate the stage; (3) to sculpt, mold, and model actors, settings, and costumes; and (4) to create an environmental atmosphere that is supportive of the play’s production concept.21

I began thinking about the lighting design for this production almost as soon as the scenic design process began. Much of the set was presumed to work because lighting would highlight it in the right way. But, without proper Radiance renderings, which could simulate the effect of various colors of light on the stage, it was hard to know for sure. Given the way the set was painted, however, it was safe to say that lighting it the right way would make the forest look warm and the court look stark. But these were only general ideas about lighting. I needed to see rehearsals, and know where the actors were moving onstage. As Gillette mentions above, part of the goal of lighting design is to selectively illuminate the stage and sculpt the actors out of the space. How could I do this, unless I knew where the actors would be onstage? Naturally, I would need to see several rehearsals.

Because I was spending my evenings painting the set, around the same time that Professor Schlatter was rehearsing with the cast, there was no chance for me to attend rehearsal while Stephen and I were still doing the bulk of the

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painting. So the plan was always for me to attend rehearsal after much of the painting had been completed.

Monday and Tuesday of the final week before tech week were needed for painting. On Monday, I was beginning to feel unwell, and so I asked Stephen to carry on without me for one night. He obliged and I focused on getting better. By Tuesday I was feeling only cautiously better, but I bounded out of bed all the same, and primed the backdrop with Stephen on Tuesday night. By Wednesday morning, I could not get out of bed. I emailed Professor Schlatter to tell him I would not be able to come in to rehearsal, but that I hoped to come to rehearsal on Thursday. On Thursday my condition had worsened still. By this point it was clear that I had respiratory flu. I experienced a range of symptoms that were very painful, but not relevant to this paper. It was time put all of my efforts into getting well for load-in on Saturday.

With the advent of my illness, I had not put together any electrics paperwork for the light hang. While I had thought through the plot carefully, there was no drafted light plot. There was no hookup. There was no instrument schedule. Fortunately, there was a cue list because Professor Schlatter and I had done a complete paper tech of the play on Wednesday morning the week before, yet another morning meeting in the week of insanity. I had done all of the design thinking, but none of the design work!

Friday morning, the day before load-in, Professor Whinnery came to my rescue. He emailed me at home to ask how I was feeling and check up on my paperwork. I readily confessed that I had none. At that point Professor
Whinnery offered to take care of plotting the lighting design, as long as I would communicate all of my design thinking to him, as well as complete the remainder of the paperwork on my own. Plotting is, for me, the most time consuming part of building a lighting design. Thanking him profusely, I accepted Professor Whinnery’s offer and asked him to let me make up the work by doing it for Turandot, the Program’s spring production.

The first thing I did was email Professor Whinnery my color choices. At the time, my thoughts were:

Court-
Front: L201  Top: R51
Forest Day-
Key: R02  Fill: R60
Forest Evening-
Key: R55  Fill: R02
Forest Night-
Front: R80  Top: R51  Low Side: R04

He interpreted my notes to create the following color key:

R02  R51  R55
------>   X   <-------
------------->  R60

R04 (low)
^  ^
|  |
|  |
R80  L201

This had not been my thought process at the time. I had been hoping to use a traditional Stanley McCandless Key-Fill lighting scheme, but the color key shown above clearly indicates a front-light-top-light scheme using R51 for top light and

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22 Kamine, Benjamin. "Color Thoughts." E-mail to Peter Whinnery. 11 Nov. 2005.
R80 and L201 for front light. Then R02, R04, R60, and R55 would fill in from the side where needed. Professor Whinnery informed me that in the Studio Theatre, the 45-45 angles rarely accomplished what they were supposed to. He strongly advised me to go with a Broadway four-point lighting scheme, which the above lighting key represents. I agreed. And as the picture below shows, that lighting scheme did a nice job of sculpting the actors out of the space and keeping their faces well lit.

While Professor Whinnery was working on the lighting plot, I set to work on slides for our Image Pros. Early in the design process, Professor Whinnery had suggested to me that we use Image Pros, which are essentially slide projectors that fit over standard lighting instruments, to project an Abstract Expressionist image on the stage, thereby enhancing the feel of the forest. Traditionally, some kind of gobo would be used to give the sense of a leafy canopy that blocks out some light, but this approach made far more sense with the overall production concept, and I incorporated it.

I began to play with digital images. First, I took several Abstract Expressionist images from the earliest periods of the movement. These were
pieces that had been titled with something resembling forest or nature. I took these images and digitally edited them in a variety of ways, playing with them in an effort to get them to look right. At the time, I didn’t yet know what right would be, other than I would know it when I saw it.

After an hour of play, I had come up with four images, none of which were right, and I was stuck. I had tried repeating parts of the image around the image. I had tried changing the color contrast of the image. I had tried shading the image with darker greens. And I had tried blurring the sharpened lines of dripped paint. I emailed Professor Whinnery with what I had and asked him for advice. He suggested that instead of editing a larger image, I blow up a very small portion of it, and see what the detail revealed.

I did that with one of the images I had found, and I still wasn’t particularly satisfied. I spent another hour editing different images of actual nature, trying to make it look more abstract, but that wasn’t working either. Finally, I began searching through my file archive for a drip painting with what I thought was the right palette. Instead of finding images with the right shapes and adding the color I wanted, I decided to look for the right colors, and see if maybe the shapes were in there on a micro level. The first painting I found with the right palette turned out, on a very small scale, to have a really nice array of shapes. It was right. I emailed it to Professor Whinnery. He agreed. So I emailed it to Stephen Hungerford and asked him to print out transparencies for the Image Pros with this image:
I was very pleased. I thought this image would look great projected onto my set. And I was right.

While I was having my exciting Image Pro revelations, Professor Whinnery was diligently and graciously working on my lighting plot. He finished the plot early in the afternoon. It is in Appendix A. The plot gave me good area control, matched the color key that Professor Whinnery and I had developed earlier in the day, and did not use all of the available dimmers. I was pleased that we would have some extra dimmers in case some of the Studio dimmers were bad, which is commonly the case. Overall, I was very pleased with the plot. Professor
Whinnery had implemented my design in precisely the way I had wanted it. Although this would not be the final version of the plot that we would use for the show, it was the plot we hung on Saturday, and I do not think that it would have gotten done without him.

I took care of the remaining paperwork Friday afternoon and went to sleep. Tomorrow was load-in, and I had to be well.
VIII. Tech Week

Load-in began at ten o’clock Saturday morning, November 12. In my absence during the week, Stephen had installed the raked stage, removed the first row of seats, and painted the backdrop using the image I had provided. With all of this in place, the bulk of load-in was to be spent on lights. The only set work to be done was stretching the ground cloth over the rake, and setting up those columns.

For our electrics crew, Professor Whinnery had brought his Introduction to Lighting class (THAR 131). The students were helpful, by and large, but as we discovered during troubleshooting, much of their work was sloppy. They hung the plot, and disappeared before focus started.

Once the plot was hung, the real work began. Nothing works properly in the Studio Theater. Dimmers that we thought worked turned out not to. And each light that wouldn’t turn on had a different reason for malfunctioning: its lamp had burnt out, it didn’t have a lamp in it, it wasn’t circuited properly, or the dimmer it was plugged into simply wasn’t working. Professor Whinnery, Stephen, and I diligently worked through most of the morning and early afternoon on solving these problems so that we could move on to focus, but it was a lot of work. Fortunately, three friends of mine from extracurricular theatre came in and gave us a hand.

Once the plot was fully troubleshooted, and the ground cloth had been stretched over the rake (an adventure in its own right), we were ready to focus.
With only four of us in the space (one member of Professor Whinnery’s class stayed for almost the whole day), loading in the columns was unreasonable. So, until the cast was freed from rehearsal, we were going to have to do without those set pieces. This meant we would be rough-focusing the plot without knowing exactly where the columns were going to end up. Because of some very good measurements on my part, we were able to get the focusing mostly right, although it had to be touched up a bit on Sunday and Monday, largely because I am so much shorter than most of the actors that were in the As You Like It cast. Focusing the lights on my head meant we had focused on their chests.

Towards the end of the day, the cast was released from rehearsal and we began loading in the columns. As predicted by the model, we had to secure them at the top as well as the bottom. They were toe-nailed to the rake, and tied off to the hanging pipes of the Studio’s rigging system. By the end of the day, however, we had noticed two significant problems that were eventually going to require our attention: the stage creaked extraordinarily loudly, and the hanging draperies, the beautiful pieces of fabric I had collected from Fabric Row, were interfering with the lighting. Both would have to be fixed soon, along with the focusing problems and several other problems we wouldn’t notice until much later.

On Sunday, we began cue-to-cue. As this was my first time seeing any of the staging, the process was very slow, but over Sunday and the beginning of
Monday, I developed a set of cues that I thought did a very nice job of telling the story. Appendix B documents most of the show’s cuing.

In Act I, there were many cues. It started at court. Here the lighting was stark. Cool lighting, including excessive use of Lee 201, made the columns look practically concrete. The draperies were down, and did a nice job of demarcating the space.

When the action moved to the forest, the Image Pros came on, bathing the stage in warm front light that was latent with color and texture. Varying the levels and the amount of cool blue R80 told the time of day, and as the scene moved towards nightfall, there was a sunset that I am particularly proud of. The now-flying draperies canopied the stage, absorbing light like enormous Chinese lanterns. The whole thing was very pretty. And, despite the fact that the draperies didn’t come down for the scenes that returned to the court, reviving the court lighting made the transition completely clear. Finally, the moonlight that bathed the stage at the end of Act I for Orlando’s poem-posting perfectly evoked the beautiful romance of a moonlit lover. Act II was largely one forest cue, but towards the end things were varied a bit. The arrival of Hymen brightened the stage to white with every light in the plot at full. And at the end of the show, Rosalind and Orlando had a romantic moment in a cue that I liked to call the “middle school dance light.”

During cue-to-cue, it became clear that the plot needed two more instruments, one downstage center special and one upstage center special. It also became very apparent that the colors I had chosen simply were not
saturated enough. The colors were easy to replace, and we did so almost immediately. The color changes I made were R21 for R02, R65 for R60, and R26 for R04. These dramatically improved the richness of the colors onstage as shown below.

Despite solving these problems, we were still left with the larger problems of a creaky stage and a set of draperies that were blocking the lights. Ultimately, Stephen cut up the ground cloth and placed carpet padding underneath it. And the drapery problem, aside from some slight refocusing and adjusted levels, we just lived with it. It turned out not to be as big a problem as we thought it would be. Those kinds of things are always a happy surprise. By Tuesday night’s run, I had a friend taking production photos, the best of which appear in Appendix B. And for Wednesday’s opening, everything worked as it was supposed to. The show was up!
IX. Post Mortem

Following the completion of As You Like It, there was a postmortem for the entire program to come together and talk about the show. In general, there were some very positive comments about the design. Some even remarked on how much bigger the environment felt because of the way the set had been designed. However, by and large, the program postmortem did not focus on my work on As You Like It. Because of this, I asked Professor Schlatter, Jason Reminick, Professor Whinnery, Stephen, student assistant director Khushboo Modi, and the acting thesis candidates, Jim Miles-Polka and Katie Foster, to sit down with me later in November and share with me their feedback on my process and product. It was time to complete the final step in the Design Process Checklist: Evaluation. The meeting was very informative and helpful for me, and what follows are some of the conclusions that I drew based on that meeting.

This show was beyond my means. The man-hours required were more than I could provide. This does not mean that it was not a rewarding, educational, and deeply fulfilling process. However, with no crew other than Stephen and me, doing a scenic and lighting design for any show would have been a challenge. This problem was greatly exacerbated by the fact that painting is traditionally the part of any scenic process that the designer must be present for. This was a paint-heavy design. Therefore, time that I, as a lighting designer, would have spent in rehearsal doing design work was instead spent doing scenic painting. I did not plan for these difficulties adequately. That the designs were
not only implemented, but implemented well and in the way I had envisioned them is far more a testament to the hard work of Stephen and the diligence of Professor Whinnery than it is to my own ability to make these things happen. However, I learned a lot, and I did the best that I could.

Difficulties aside (and we did conclude at the meeting that one extra week would have made all the difference, although how many shows is that true for?), there were many things about this process that I think were ideal. The scenic design process started early. There was immense director-designer collaboration, and since I was the lighting designer, designer-designer communication was practically taken care of. The set was communicated to the actors early on (thanks to the model), allowing them to prepare for stage work before there was a stage to work on. The design was fully and precisely implemented. With few exceptions, careful planning prevented tech week surprises. And most importantly, no one was injured and everyone had fun.

I loved doing this thesis production. Not only that, but I learned an extraordinary amount about myself and a variety of academic subjects. The research I did into Abstract Expressionism was fascinating. I feel as though I am actually a more complete person for knowing about Pollock and having attempted to paint the way he did. And I learned to push my own limitations in a way that was productive and safe. There was a net of individuals to help keep me from failing, without which, I would not have succeeded. This was a project about group effort, even if the group was small. I am deeply indebted to all of the
people who made this possible, but in particular: Stephen Hungerford, Professor Jim Schlatter, and Professor Peter Whinnery. Thank you.
Appendix A: Design Documents

1. Preliminary Ground Plan sketch in AutoCAD
2. Rough Ground Plan drawing with 1' columns and uncut thrones
3. Rough Section Drawing of (2)
4. Preliminary Radiance Rendering (see Appendix C)
5. Backdrop Image
6. Lighting Key
7. Image Pro Slide
8. Light Plot going into tech week
9. Final Ground Plan
10. Final Section Drawing
11. Final Design Drawings
12. Final Light Plot
13. Final Instrument Schedule (2 pages)
14. Final Channel Hookup (3 pages)
Preliminary Ground Plan sketch in AutoCAD
Rough Ground Plan drawing with 1’ columns and uncut thrones
Rough Section Drawing of (2)
Preliminary Radiance Rendering (see Appendix C)

Backdrop Image
Lighting Key

Image Pro Slide
Light Plot going into tech week
Final Ground Plan
**Instrument Schedule for As You Like It**

Director: Jim Schlatter  
Designer: Benjamin H. Kamine

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Channel Hookup for As You Like It

Director: Jim Schlatter
Designer: Benjamin H. Kamine

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Appendix B: Production Stills
Orlando (Jim Miles-Polka) has defeated Charles (Austen Helfrich) the Duke’s wrestler. Duke Frederick (Boris Fedorov) checks if Charles is okay.
Rosalind (Elena Grill) gives Orlando a token of her affection after he wins the wrestling match. Celia (Katie Foster) looks on.

Celia and Rosalind decide to flee the court of Duke Frederick.
Scene change from the court to the Forest of Arden: The blue light is intended to let the audience see actors performing personal transitions for forest life.

Duke Senior (Caleb Liu) commiserates with his banished lords (Austen Helfrich, Rachel Gordon, Karl Wellman, Jr.).
Duke Frederick interrogates Le Beau (Brooke Palmieri) on the whereabouts of Orlando.
Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone (Jeff Martinez) arrive in Arden.

Orlando and Adam (Michael Sloan Warren) arrive in Arden.
Jaques (Matt Rosenbaum) moralizes for Duke Senior and Lord Amiens (Rachel Gordon).

“All the world’s a stage....”
Jaques stays apart as Duke Senior and his banished lords welcome Adam and Orlando to their camp.

Enticed by campfire revelry, Jaques joins Duke Senior, his lords, Adam, and Orlando in dinner and song.
Oliver (Gabe Crane), banished by Duke Frederick, flees to Arden, while Orlando, already there, composes poetry.

Inspired by the moon and Rosalind, Orlando posts his poems all over Arden.
Rosalind, as Ganymede, promises Orlando a magical revelation.

The party of lovers and lords awaits Hymen’s entrance.
Hymen (Brooke Palmieri), heralded by Rosalind, marries Silvius (Robert Jakobi) and Phebe (Katie Kuhl).
The newly wed couples dance into the evening.

Soon only Celia and Oliver and Rosalind and Orlando remain as night falls.
Rosalind delivers the epilogue.

Faculty director Jim Schlatter gives the cast notes.
Appendix C: Renderings of Preliminary Design Ideas
Act I, Scene 3: “Mistress, dispatch you with your safest haste
And get you from our court.”

Act II, Scene 1: “Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile ...”
Act II, Scene 7: “All the world’s a stage ...”

Act III, Scene 1: “Find out thy brother, wheresoe’er he is; “
Act III, Scene 2: “Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love:”

Rosalind’s Epilogue
Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

**AutoCAD** – Drafting software made by Autodesk that also allows three-dimensional modeling.

**Broadway four-point** – A style of lighting primarily employed on Broadway stages that uses four lighting sources for each area: a back light, a front light, and a side light from either side.

**Focus** – The process of focusing each of the lighting instruments in a given lighting plot where onstage it ought to be focused.

**Found Space** – A space used for performance that is not regularly used or configured as a theatre.

**Fresnel** – Any lighting instrument with a Fresnel lens.

**Gobo** – A cutout placed in an instrument that casts a shadow, breaking up the beam of light.

**House Plot** – The standard lighting plot on file for a given theatre space.

**Image Pro** – Essentially a projector, with this device (which can be attached to any Altman Shakespeare lighting instrument), a printed transparency can be used as a gobo.

**Jomar** – A chain of fabric stores that sell discounted fabric in bulk.

**L201/Lee 201** – Lee gel: Full C.T. Blue

**Motivated Lighting** – Lighting that makes use of a theatrically defined source. For example, lighting that is intended to be sunlight or firelight would be motivated lighting, whereas a bright fuchsia special in a dream sequence would not be.

**Paper-tech** – Planning, in advance, the cues for a show.

**Parnel** – A lighting instrument made by ETC, as part of its Source Four product line. Designed to replace the Fresnel in conventional lighting applications.

**R02** – Rosco gel: Bastard Amber
R04 – Rosco gel: Medium Bastard Amber
R21 – Rosco gel: Golden Amber
R26 – Rosco gel: Light Red
R51 – Rosco gel: Surprise Pink
R55 – Rosco gel: Lilac
R60 – Rosco gel: No Color Blue
R65 – Rosco gel: Daylight Blue
R80 – Rosco gel: Primary Blue
R91 – Rosco gel: Primary Green

Radiance – A suite of programs for the analysis and visualization of lighting in design.

Rake – An inclined stage area

Rough-focus – Imprecise focusing usually done because circumstances won’t allow a more precise focus until later.

Special – A lighting instrument used for a particular cue instead of general area lighting.

Stanley McCandless key-fill – A style of lighting pioneered by lighting designer Stanley McCandless in which two instruments are used to light an area, both at 45 degree angles to the proscenium: a key light, meant to dominate the color of the scene, and a complementary fill light, meant to fill in the shadows of the key.

Troubleshooting – Going through each instrument in a plot and making sure that it is working properly.


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<http://pacshop.dca.net/private/133/Classnotes/intro.html>.