

WB
WARNER BROS.
STUDIO TOUR
LONDON

THE
MAKING OF
Harry Potter

SET DESIGN



The **Production Designer** oversees Set Design on a film set. They are responsible for the overall look and feel of the story and how it's communicated on film. Their job is to design the sets that give audiences information about the time period, the location, what the characters are doing and how they are feeling within that setting.

All set designs begin with the description of the location in the script, which is often very brief. For example, the first time we meet Rubeus Hagrid, the description of his hut states:
'Everything here is oversized'.

Stuart Craig, the Production Designer for all eight Harry Potter films, would start by creating an initial sketch or 'doodle'. He would then show this to the Director who provides feedback and suggestions until it is approved. Anything designed for films may go through many iterations and designs before it is approved.

After this, a **Concept Artist** will work with the Director and Production Designer to come up with a more fully formed concept artwork for all the departments to use as further inspiration for their designs.

Once approved, the **Art Department** will create **plans and elevations**, which are detailed drawings, essentially blueprints that the **Construction** teams will use to build the sets.

Finally, a **white card model** is made to ensure that the Director is happy with the design, but also so they can plan their **camera angles** using a **lipstick camera** (a small camera used to film the model from every angle). This is done to try and save as much money as possible. It's important that the set is built correctly first time in the Director's vision, to not waste any time on set changes or rebuilding.

It's expensive to rent cameras and to **film on location** or in a **sound stage**, so the Director and the **Camera Crew** must know where they are setting everything up and what they are filming on that day.

After each stage of planning has been approved, the set is finally built. For some of the filming the crew would go **on location**. The general rule is that if a set is needed for less than two weeks, it's more cost effective to go on location – otherwise it will be built in a soundstage. Examples of locations used in the Harry Potter films include London Zoo, Laycock Abbey, Christchurch College Oxford and Alnwick Castle. If you watch Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, you will be able to see all these locations - can you guess which scene they were each used for?

The final stage in creating a set is to make it look lived-in. In Hagrid's hut, the **Set Decorator** has helped to show Hagrid's character with use of simple furniture and animal cages.




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Now it is your turn to design a set. In order to do this, you need to make the following decisions about your film:

The genre of my film is: _____

The time period my film is set in is: _____

The location for my scene/ film is: _____

- ♦ Research the style and architecture of your chosen historical period and film location (using the internet, historical books or newspapers and magazines)
- ♦ Watch a film of your genre in order to research what yours might look like
- ♦ Create a mood board (a collage of images, samples and words) to reflect the style/colours/lighting for your film, drawing links between the different elements. For example, you may decide to have dim lighting because you are creating a set for a horror film
- ♦ Create a rough sketch of your set

**You can develop your sketch into something more fully formed -
a shoe box model, or a white card model for example:**

1. Take a piece of square card, fold it in half
2. Unfold the card again and fold the edges into the centre fold
3. You should now have a rectangular folded piece of card. Fold in half again (with the two shorter edges of the rectangle meeting) and unfold, to create a new centre fold
4. Flip the card over so you can't see the side where the edges meet. Fold the edges into the centre fold again

5. You should now have a square folded piece of card, with each quarter now a flap

6. At the top-right, put your finger between the two folds, and push the quarter of folded paper out to the right so that it creates a triangle. Press the triangle down so it's flat

7. Repeat for the top-left quarter

8. Flip back over- your house is complete!

9. Now that you have created your white card house model, you can draw onto it your set design idea which you developed earlier

