

## Research on Display Prop Design in Stage Environment

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### Abstract

In 2020, China, which entered the 1920s, is about to complete its thirteenth five-year plan and usher in a year of comprehensive construction of a well-off society. The stage art also relies on the increasingly abundant social life to a more abundant and diversified period, from ancient Chinese altars to Golanwashe, ancient Greek Bacchus festival to theaters all over Europe, stage art has changed from being designed for gods to today Walked into the home of ordinary people. The high demand for stage performance also extends to the high standard of stage design. It can be said that stage design is an important cornerstone for achieving a perfect stage. As a part of the stage design, display props not only promote the show of the plot, but also lay the foundation for the actor's action space. In the process of stage design, display props are not only important constituent elements, but also their characteristics, metaphors, images, and colors, materials, and scales that are worth studying. This article explores the deeper meaning through the study of basic theory, and uses display props as the starting point. The ultimate goal is to achieve the enrichment of stage design theory and the promotion of design practice.

### Keywords

Stage environment, display props, metaphor, emotional meaning.

### 1. Introduction: From Dionysus to the Public

According to legend, in Greece 3,000 years ago, drama and stage were born in social life. People in ancient Greece praised Dionysus in the form of role singing on the outdoor stage due to their worship and even admiration for Dionysus. Since then, stage art, like Liang Zhu, has supported a world of cultural development in the world.

Looking back on the development of stage art, whether it is in the East or the West, the emergence of stage and stage art not only witnessed the trajectory of history, but also witnessed the continuous evolution of culture.

#### 1.1. Origin of Research

As the birthplace of drama culture, Greece has the oldest drama culture in the history of human civilization. Greek designers have doubled the sound effects of performers through the semi-circular layout structure, and stage art has stood firm in the long history.

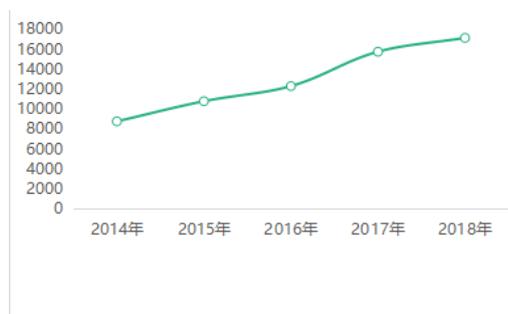
Today, the proportion of art performances in arts and cultural life is showing a year-on-year increase. Whether it is performing groups, venues, performances, or audience numbers, they have continued to increase in the past five years.



**Figure 1.** Line chart of the number of art performance venues in 2014-2018 (self-drawn)



**Figure 2.** Line chart of the number of audiences in art performance venues from 2014 to 2018 (self-drawn)



**Figure 3.** Line chart of the number of art performance groups in 2014-2018 (self-drawn)



**Figure 4.** Line chart of performances of art performance groups in 2014-2018 (self-drawn)

How the stage design becomes a powerful aid to the repertoire, and what effect does the design and presentation of the stage display props have on the revelation of the repertoire? All of the above have become issues that the author has focused on during the research process.

In the course of this exploration, the author further understands that: each piece of props and building structure has specific meaning contained in it, stage design workers need to use research content as an entry point in the stage design process to extract important Elements;

and then through the design of furniture, building components, etc. to carry out figurative or imagery referrals-this is also the reason for the selection of topics in this paper.

## 1.2. Research Status of This Subject

In the current social life, economic growth and the great abundance of life have given the public more opportunities to enjoy additional artistic and cultural life. After the end of World War II, the design activities and theoretical research on the global stage have grown because of such activity.

The author draws a review of the existing data on stage design and prop design at home and abroad: for centuries, both East and West countries have paid great attention to the research and practice of stage design. However, subject to the communication barriers at the cultural and literary level of various countries, although the research on stage design is positive, researchers are mostly focused on the study of stage setting, clothing, and lighting; the achievements in the field of stage display props research are few and far between.

In the collection of dissertation materials, when searching on China Zhiwang with the keyword of "stage display prop design", the search result is displayed as zero. When searching on the China Knowledge Network with the keyword "stage prop design" as the keyword, I got 14 paper results-the research direction is mostly focused on the design and application of props. This "prop" is defined as the performer's hand-held items and clothing. It involves the design of the stage display props.

When searching with the English keyword "stage design" (the main search source is China HowNet, Google Scholar), there are almost no relevant papers and materials, and occasional articles are all examples of stage design and performance.

To sum up, in the research of the design of stage display props, there are very few historical materials and existing materials at home and abroad, that is, the theoretical research field of stage display prop design is currently in a relatively blank state.

## 1.3. Research Methods

In the research process of this article, the main research methods used are literature induction, interdisciplinary research, case analysis and investigation, and the use of computer 3D modeling to produce renderings to practice the design of a stage's stage display props.

## 2. Stage Environment in Modern Society

In recent years, the Chinese stage has emerged from the decline and began to have a large number of loyal audiences. This trend has greatly promoted the demand for stage design in recent years, corresponding to the improvement of the stage environmental standards; however, few viewers pay special attention to the stage Environmental design and display prop design itself.

Since stage design on the historical stage in the eighteenth century, a variety of understandings and definitions have evolved; these different understandings and definitions originated from: each stage designer in the process of stage design, due to their respective growth and development Self-judgment formed by the influence of learning environment.

### 2.1. Different Titles of the Stage Environment

From the beginning of the 14th century Renaissance, to the six centuries so far, the expression of stage design has undergone ever-changing. For example, "stage decoration", "set design", "installation art", "stage art" and so on. To this day, there is still no uniform title for the name of the stage design.

Many modern and contemporary stage designers believe that the term "stage art" covers too broad a scope and is not sufficiently targeted and scientific. So far, the terminology in this field has been agreed to use "performance" and "stage design" as the terminology.

## 2.2. Types of Stage Environment

The term "drama" is a general term for a variety of stage performing arts. It itself contains many types, especially in the contemporary era of rapid technological development. The types of dramas have become unprecedentedly diverse with new media and technology.

The stage environment mainly exists in five categories: opera stage, musical stage, drama stage, drama stage and dance stage.

## 2.3. Definition of Stage Environment

With the continuous opening of the cultural field, the emergence of new technologies and materials, the contemporary stage environment is already an open and compatible field, the design limitations of the stage have become less and less, and the "boundary" has become more and more blurred, stage design It has surpassed the "stage" itself and moved towards a wider territory-the pursuit of aesthetics allows us to see more and more traces of the participation of stage environmental elements in large exhibitions, installation arts, and television programs.



Figure 5. Performance stage of the TV show "National Treasure" (self-made)

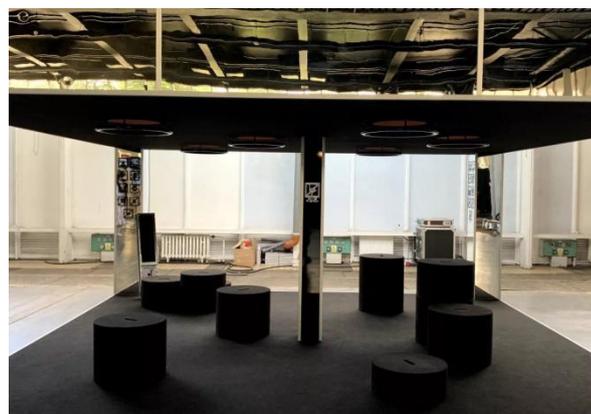


Figure 6. The installation of the infinite sand dunes at the four-year station in Prague in June 2019 (WeChat public account of China Academy of Stage Art)

## 2.4. Basic Functions of the Stage Environment

(1) Organize the action space: the stage design process is the process of planning and designing the actors' performance trajectory.

(2) The specific environment that reflects the action of the drama: indicating the time and place of the event, revealing the characteristics of the characters, and also participating in the development of the action of the drama.

(3) Organize the communication space between the audience and the actors: The modern stage has paid great attention to the viewer's feelings and the interaction between the audience and the actors. The stage is no longer limited to the "table" in the architectural sense, but through the stage design The worker's plan is linked to the auditorium.



**Figure 7.** The design of the lotus pond in Lai Shengchuan's drama "Dream of Dream"

## 2.5. Summary

It can be concluded that the stage design is not a simple indoor or outdoor space design, but a holistic work that integrates multiple links and multiple factors.

The stage environment is not only a tool to meet the needs of the plot, but also to satisfy the viewer's pursuit of beauty through the design of the stage. The design of the stage environment out of the drama is thin and meaningless, only combining the aesthetic value and the actual needs of the plot The design of the stage environment can be regarded as a qualified stage work.

## 3. Display Props in the Stage Environment

### 3.1. Props in the Stage Environment

In actual performances, the influence of props is even greater than that of the stage set. In other words, the effect of props is more straightforward than the stage set. For a good stage performance, the participation of the set can not be missed. Prop participation.

The scope of props is very wide, and the forms and contents displayed are also diverse. The props can be divided into three categories by their size, significance, and relationship with the actors: small props, portable props, and stage display props.

#### (1) Small props:

The definition of small props is very simple: living utensils such as pots and pans are easy to move and are small objects.

#### (2) Portable props:

The definition of carry-on props is its literal meaning: the actor will carry items with him when performing.

#### (3) Stage display props:

Stage display props can be divided into two categories according to the difficulty of their movement: decorative stage display props and large stage display props.

Props, along with lighting, scenery, clothing, and other departments together form a complete stage performance. Compared with other items, props have a pivotal significance in promoting and expanding the plot. Its functional characteristics are mainly reflected in three aspects:

#### (1) Reproduction function

The most basic function of props on the stage is to reveal the characteristics of the era in which the repertoire is located, the style of the characters, the country, the regional environment, etc. through its existence; second, the props can highlight the social class, occupation, hobbies, etc. of the characters.

### (2) Ideological function

Props can refer to some non-existent objects or times through organic combination with the content of the drama. You can also pin some emotions of the characters in the play, etc.

### (3) Actual use function

Another basic feature of props is that their existence is meant to be used by actors. Actors can rely on props to unfold their movements and strengthen the tension of physical performance.

The great inclusiveness of stage art makes the design requirements of props very diversified. The props used in realism or documentary shows are objects that exist objectively in real life. In addition, some props need strong visual impact in the stage environment, and designers need to find safe alternative materials and components for design.

All in all, the design and use of props is also a part that stage designers need to pay attention to in their design work: the design of props must ensure the visual effect consistent with the stage, and ensure the safety of the performers and viewers.

## 3.2. Display Props in the Stage Environment

According to the survey, stage display props actually provide viewers with visual enjoyment in the process of participating in stage activities and plot development. This is actually an important meaning given to stage display props at the beginning of design.

\* 1. 你认为舞台设计对于戏剧呈现的效果影响是否重要

<input type="radio"/> 重要
<input type="radio"/> 没关注过
<input type="radio"/> 不重要

In the process of shaping the overall picture of the stage environment, many basic elements and shapes need to be combined and matched. When the stage display props are taken out of the stage space as a factor, the information and aesthetic meaning conveyed by the stage display props can also be seen. The display props form the space of the stage design with their own points, lines, faces, and body attributes. Each side of the display props, the volume and color of each face affect the stage. The display props create a limited space with their own objects of different sizes and colors. This space acts like a actor's performance to add to the stage.

As one of the important factors in the stage design stage, the design of the display props lays out how it reacts to the stage environment in the actual application process, and it also reflects to a certain extent how the audience produces corresponding emotional effects with the repertoire.

The characteristics of stage display props are mainly reflected in three representations:

### (1) Practicality of stage display props

The stage display props are equivalent to the role of the set in the actor's performance. They can provide the actor's performance with a route of travel, the fulcrum generated by the body movements, and help the actor enhance the appeal of the performance.

### (2) Reproducibility of stage display props

The existence of stage display props is to conform to the characteristics of the era and regional environment of the repertoire through its rich era characteristics. Some stage display props

with distinctive era style and event characteristics can better reproduce the specific time point of the event in the stage design.

### (3) Symbolism of stage display props

A (group) expressive stage display props must be able to play the role of symbol or metaphor. The symbolic embodiment is mainly concentrated on the following three points: breaking away from its inherent attributes given in objective reality; revealing the character characteristics and the fate of the characters in the play; the change in the color, material and scale of the stage display props have a symbolic meaning.

### 3.3. Performance Form of Stage Display Props

The stage display props mainly present tables and chairs (furniture), doors and windows (building components) in the presentation of specific items.

On the stage of traditional Chinese opera, "one table and two chairs", as a unique performance model of traditional opera art, provides great freedom and imagination space for drama performance, which is also the reason why this model has been enduring so far.

Stage display props can also be expressed in the definition of the drama space: unlike China's ideological treatment, Western drama is more concrete in the design of stage display props.

Each stage design worker will make the stage display props more diverse and delicate in the future performance form according to their different understanding of the repertoire.

## 4. Design Practice of Stage Display Props

After sorting out the specific application and conceptual issues related to the design of stage display props, the author believes that the theoretical issues related to design still need to be implemented in design practice. The author selected a very famous musical "Le Figaro's Wedding" by Mozart for script analysis, stage display prop design analysis, and a set of stage environment design renderings through specific practice analysis.

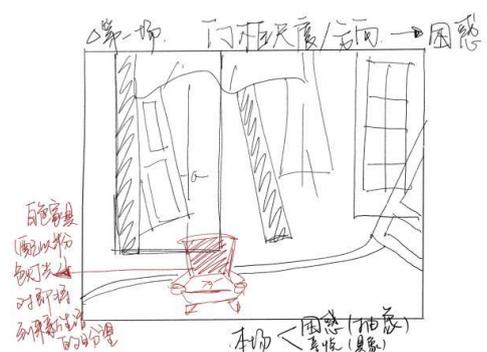


Figure 8. Design Sketch of "The Wedding of Figaro" (self-drawn)

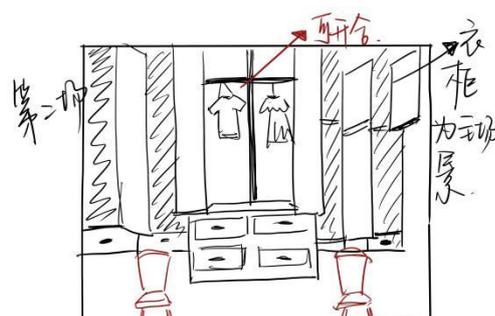


Figure 9. Design Sketch of "The Wedding of Figaro" (self-drawn)

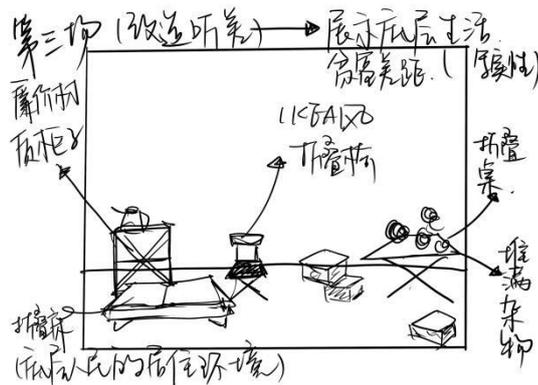


Figure 10. Design Sketch of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)

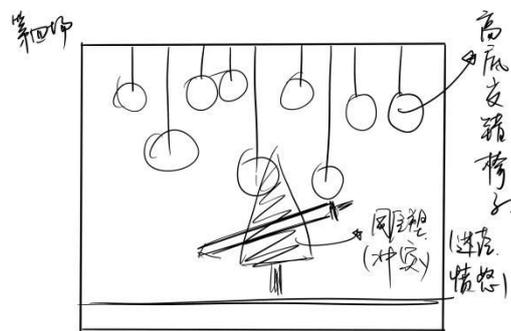


Figure 11. Design Sketch of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)

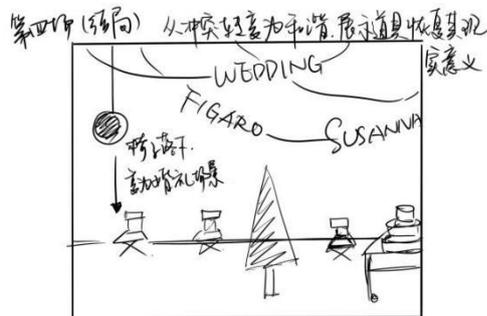


Figure 12. Sketch of the design of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)



Figure 13. The rendering of the first scene of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)



**Figure 14.** The rendering of the second scene of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)



**Figure 15.** The rendering of the second scene of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)



**Figure 16.** "Le Figaro's Wedding" the third scene of the seventh design effect drawing (self-drawn)



**Figure 17.** The renderings of the first to twelfth scenes of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)



**Figure 18.** The renderings of the 13th to 15th scenes of "Le Figaro's Wedding" (self-drawn)

From the perspective of the practice of stage design in "Le Figaro's Wedding", the relationship, practicality, reproducibility and symbolism of stage display props with the stage environment are all reflected in the design process:

In the first act, based on the interpretation of the original work, doors and windows are used to refer to the protagonist's inner uneasiness and complexity, that is, the doors and windows predict the complexity and uncertainty of the subsequent drama plots beyond the conventional scale and placement angle.

In the second act, the Countess's space is used as the main scene of the plot. The wardrobe is not only the objective scene of the show, that is, the Duchess' bedroom, but also the doors and windows to provide channels for the subsequent plot.

The third act uses synthetic furniture and tables and chairs that represent low prices to construct a living environment with poor hearing, and reproduces the living environment of the people at the bottom with specific stage display props.

The fourth act unfolds the characters in the play from the outbreak of conflict to the happy ending, and finally announces the beautiful vision of civilians and nobles reaching harmony.

The stage design of "Le Figaro's Wedding" is a fusion practice of the author's theory of important characteristics of stage display props and stage environment design work. Through this design practice, the author has the inevitability of the existence of stage display props in stage environment design work. For a deeper understanding.

## 5. Conclusion

With the continuous development of China's concept of "introducing and going abroad", all walks of life in China are now on the path of rapid development, and the demand for spiritual culture has been further expanded. The stage has gradually entered the lives of ordinary people. In this article, after the literature analysis and example analysis, the author summarizes and organizes the main characteristics of the stage display props in the stage environment:

(1) Stage display props can be transformed into larger or smaller units in the stage environment to construct the overall layout of the stage environment.

(2) In terms of the characteristics and performance of stage display props, stage display props are not only the so-called "concrete objects" in reality, but also reveal the "imagery objects" of the performer's objective external environment and subjective inner changes, even for The driving significance of the plot and characters is greater than its practical significance.

In summary, in the design process of the stage environment, props, especially stage display props, account for a large proportion, which is far from what is commonly understood. Stage

display props are an indispensable element of various art forms, and their design and production have also become a basic theory that must be mastered in stage design work.

Studying stage display props not only deepens the author's deeper understanding of stage and repertoire during the stage design practice, but also has certain practical significance: the advancement of science and technology and the popularization of new materials have provided more for the design of stage display props Many ideas.

China's stage environment design field is still in the initial stage of development. It takes time and richer practical experience to reach the front-end status; I hope that many design practitioners can create unique Chinese cultural significance while adopting excellent works from various countries. Stage environment design and stage display prop design works.

Based on the importance and prospects of stage display props in the stage environment, follow-up research on how stage display props find their own artistic expression in a variety of styles requires more in-depth discussion, and the historical inevitability of stage display props should also be planned into the follow-up research framework; the design and aesthetics of stage display props are closely connected with the pre- and post-stage links of stage environment design. The in-depth exploration of stage display prop design is also a weak link in the supplementary stage design chain. The author hopes that he can contribute his strength to the research in this field with this simple article, and also hopes that this preliminary study will be the motivation for the in-depth research of the author in the future.

## Acknowledgements

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