

**ABKM** BACHELOR OF ART: THEATRE AND COSTUME DESIGN  
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Maastricht Theatre Academy



# Theatre & costume design

The starting point for every student should be their fantasy. They have the chance to explore and expand personal borders in order to develop a new visual language and their individuality.



**In this study programme, the design projects scenography and film stand central. Related subjects are taught at least three times a year with the help of changing drama performances, scripts etc.**

The execution of a project, an idea, or a concept for a drama performance, an opera, or a film script takes place step by step. First students conduct research and analysis of texts and music, gather material and sketch the stage design, including a storyboard and provisional models; all under supervision of respective professionals. Finally, a definite model is designed, sometimes followed by an actual realization of project. Attention is given to the final presentation of the design, as it is a moment when student and teacher team can examine whether the student has come up with a proposal that matches the plot and style of the drama, which entails a

responsible dramaturgic concept and which accounts for directorial consequences, practicality and budget.

In the last year of the programme, the department of theatre design cooperates with students from the programme Technology & Theatre as well as Production and Stage Art which are offered at the Theatre Academy from the Arts Academy Amsterdam. Under lecturers' supervision, students exchange their knowledge and experiences about technical realisation, budget and production of the theatre designs. During the programme, students are also assigned to work on the construction, execution and production plan of their designs and ideas.

The specialization theatre design includes a set of subjects next to the main subject of design. These are dramaturgy, textual and

visual research, painting (décor and perception), drawing (anatomy, model, perspective, technical), theatre, history of music and opera and general art history, as well as theatre techniques, light and projection techniques, computer-based applications, model forming etc. Further, more specific subjects that deal with the development of new media are being worked on. In order to introduce students to the reality of the working market and to give an added value to the specializations within the department, guest lecturers offer an insight into their work and expertise. Doing this, the programme continues to follow most recent developments in the international scene. However, the overall goal of the programme is to educate creative theatre designers and similar autonomous art disciplines for the future. ■



**The specialization Theatre Costume Design focalizes on design projects within the study, which take place at least three times a year. Visualization of their fantasy and ideas is always important.**

During the course of their studies, students have the possibility to develop and explore their capabilities to reach a new level of personal visual solutions and their individuality. The actual execution of a costume concept for theatre, opera, ballet etc mostly takes place in several steps. First, the student analyses the text and/ or the music of the piece with the help of a theatre expert or a musicologist, paying attention to the historical and contemporary setting, the zeitgeist and the characters. All these aspects are reflected in the costume.

Next, students are supervised by professional costume designers when collecting material and producing first sketches, models, scale drawings etc. They take into account material research and technical aspects of execution. Finally, the actual costume is realized, which means that either all or one particular costume is carried out. This is the moment when it becomes clear whether the student has established a good connection with the piece and the characters and knows how to account for an responsible dramaturgic concept, directorial consequences, functionality for the actors, material and technical practicality and budget.

The bachelor Theatre Costume Design consists of several subjects next to the main subject design and includes dramaturgy, text and image analysis, painting and drawing (anatomy and model), history of theatre, music and opera, general theories of arts, and history of costumes. Technical subjects on software-applications, light and projection technology are complementing this set, while subjects concerning the new media are under development. Guest lectures add value to the programme by bringing in their professional and practical expertise, in order to keep the department on track with modern developments and innovations on national and international level. The programme aims to educate future professional theatre costume designers and other related disciplines such as dance, opera, film and television. ■





**Katharina Phillip**  
4th year of Theatre Design

**Why did you choose to study at the ABKM/Maastricht Theatre Academy?**  
I study Theatre Design, which is a specialization that takes place in coöperation from the Maastricht Theatre Academy and the ABKM. I chose this direction as I had already worked with theatres before my studies, during high school. I guess I just “slipped” into the scene and moved forward. At some point, I thought, why not go further and continue with a study in theatre design. I started to apply and during that process I also heard about the ABKM in Maastricht. I applied and got admitted. I really wanted to study here as it had a good reputation, as well.

**You already knew what you wanted to do for your specialization. How did you like the first propedeutic year? Did it have some added value for you?**  
First of all, it helped me to get accustomed to the country and learn the language proficiently enough. I only later learned that I could have skipped the first year because of my practical experience, but today I am glad to have been part of that first common year. You get to know lots of people from different backgrounds, and especially now, before our final exams we can all help each other: One of my friends studies photography, she is going to take the photos of my work.

**What has been the most important thing you have learned during your studies?**  
Personally, I have gained a lot by studying abroad. Although my home country Germany is very close, you are still abroad

and you have to be more independent. I have met so many nice people here with so many different backgrounds – everybody I met was very open. I feel very well integrated. This is also because of the common first year.

**How is the atmosphere at your department?**  
Because we study at the Theatre Academy, we are mixed with the students there, and we get to know even more people there. In our department, we are quite small, we very much have grown together in the last three years, and we know nearly everything about each other. Sometimes, that’s annoying, but you know that everyone is there for you and helps you if you need them.

**Is there anything you are really proud of?**  
I have done my internship at *Het Huis van Bourgondië* here in Maastricht, where I worked together with a director: The piece premiered last Friday and that was a very special moment for me.

**What do you do for your final exam?**  
During the last year, everybody gets the same assignment. We work on three pieces throughout the year, which are supervised by teachers. The executed designs are then graded and form our final exam.

**What are your dreams? What would you like to achieve in the future?**  
Especially during my internship, I have realized that theatre design is team work. You are dependent on directors, actors and many other external influences. Of course you



EXAM STUDENTS



**Elif Korkmaz**  
4th year of Theatre Costume Design

**Why have you chosen to study Theatre Costume Design at the ABKM/Maastricht Theatre Academy?**  
Ever since I saw “*Papageno*” at the age of 7, I knew that theatre was my destiny. I started working at the theatre as soon as I could, first as an intern and then later as an assistant and freelance costume designer. I have thrived in my assistant job at the theatre in Cologne but I also wanted to work internationally. Although I was already working as a costume designer, I did not have any professional qualifications. My colleagues in Cologne told me that there is a special education programme for theatre costume design in Maastricht, and due to my experience I had the opportunity to skip the first year and start with the specialization immediately. Theatre Costume design has long been my passion and I am glad and thankful, especially to my teachers and parents that I have had the opportunity to realize that dream.

**What have you learned during your studies at the ABKM/Maastricht Theatre Academy?**  
On a personal level, the studies have helped me to mature and develop into the person and costume designer I am today. I have become much calmer, and more patient, a character trait I certainly did not have before my studies and experiences here. I have reached the edge of what I could do at times, but have always come out of it successfully. I value the experience of knowing where your personal capabilities are. I felt that during my studies, I have been guided to explore them.

Professionally, I have particularly improved my drawing skills. When I came here, I could hardly draw a sketch of a costume, I had always designed by putting materials together on models. Sketching really is my weakness, but I have tackled that with the help of my teachers both here and

at the Theatre Academy. I have even been told, that I had developed an own style in the sketches for my final project! I am very proud of myself that I was able to overcome that weakness. Technical skills are in fact very important for the realization of a project, and I have been trained in Photoshop and other specially designed software and I have actually become a huge fan – they give you so many possibilities to work on your sketch and improve your design on different levels. Now, I can easily and quickly work on my concepts and adapt them

**our programme only has a few students. How is the atmosphere like?**  
Indeed! We are only eight people in class. That creates a very informal atmosphere. We have our lessons at the Theatre Academy, and I love the spirit there as you are in direct contact with theatre during your studies already. For us it is difficult to distinguish between private life and the academy, as our class is more like a family. We work together very closely, and we kind of know everything from one another. However, I also enjoy coming back to the ABKM; we are free to use the working areas here, which are very well-equipped. It is also nice to see some different faces, although I do feel at home at the Theatre Academy.

**Where do you get your inspiration from?**  
From everywhere actually. At home, I have my own atelier and library where I work when the ABKM or the Theatre Academy is not open. My parents have supported me on my path from the beginning so that I was able to collect quite some books and materials in my atelier. I do not have a specific source of inspiration, but I would say that you have to be interested, not only in your surroundings but also in other and new tech-



niques. Just recently, I have started embroidering by machine, something I had always done by hand only. It opened a lot of new possibilities, and gave me a boost in my work. Similar happened when we work with little models at the Academy, a few weeks ago. The project was about designing costumes for a Shakespeare drama, and we worked with puppets similar to those in that time.

**What was your biggest success so far and what are your future plans?**  
I am very glad that I have finished the study programme, as I cannot work to start working fulltime again. I have been successful working on a freelance basis already. My best friend and I work together and have set up our own business, he is a hat maker and we complement each other quite well. I have in that respect specialized in designing and making corsets. Being able to work in the field I have been passionate about for so long already is my dream and my biggest success I would say.

At the moment I am also busy with the costumes for the final exam of the fourth year theatre students at the Theatre Academy, so that is another project in the near future, I am very happy with.

In the long run, I am first going back to my work in Cologne, this time in a higher position and with yet more experience, but I am also thinking of following a master in Antwerp as they offer a renown programme in theatre costume design, which focuses more on the realization of designs than concepts or sketches. I think this would round up the qualifications and skills I have gained here. ■

*les contes d'Hoffmann, Jacques Offenbach*





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& Theater Costume Design (TCD)**

*pictures: from left to right*

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