

Mise-en-Scene and Design

What is Mise-en-Scene?

- Mise-en scene (pronounced meez-ahn-sen) literally means “staging or putting on action or scene” in a movie.
- Mise-en-scene is the total arrangement of settings, costumes, lighting, sound, and acting--everything you see and hear on the screen, frame to frame.
- The two major components of mise-en-scene are design and composition.



Moulin Rouge! (2001)

Design

- Design is a plan for form (structure, size, color texture, etc.) we see on the screen.
- Design should help express a movie's vision; be appropriate to the narrative; create the correct times, spaces, and moods; and relate to themes.



Sweeney Todd (2007)

Art Director and Production Designer

- The art director and production designer are concerned with the following elements: setting; lighting; and costume, makeup, and hairstyle.



Pan's Labyrinth (2006)

Setting

- The setting of a film is the environment (realistic or imagined) in which the narrative takes place.
- A movie set is not reality but a fragment of reality created as the setting for a particular shot, and it must be constructed both to look authentic and photograph well.



Memoirs of a Geisha (2005)

Decor and Properties

- Decor includes the color and textures of the interior decoration, furniture, draperies, curtains and properties (props)--objects such as paintings, vases, flowers, tea sets, etc. that help us understand the characters.



The Aviator (2004)

Lighting

- During preproduction, most production designers and art directors include an idea of lighting in their sketches.
- Through highlights, lighting, calls attention to shapes and textures; through shadows it may mask or conceal things.



Chicago (2002)

Costume

- The setting of a film generally governs the design of the costumes; however, costumes tend to reflect the time they hope to represent and the time in which they were created.
- The movies have always been associated with the greatest style and glamour.
- Beautiful clothes worn by beautiful people attract audiences.



My Fair Lady (1964)

Makeup

- Traditionally, makeup had a contemporary look regardless of historical settings.
- The single most important person in the manufacture of movie makeup is Max Factor.



Cleopatra (1963)

Hairstyle

- During the studio years, hairstyles were based on modified modern looks rather than favoring authenticity.
- Up until the 1960s, actors were required to wear wigs for aesthetic and practical reasons.



Edward Scissorhands (1990)

Frames and Planes

- When discussing the composition of a frame, we divide theoretically into three planes--foreground, middle ground, and background.



Sleepy Hollow (1999)

Composition

- Composition is the organization, distribution, balance, and general relationship of stationary objects and figures, as well as of light, shade, line, and color within the frame.



Romeo + Juliet (1996)

Framing the Actor

- The most important figure in the frame is usually the actor, who is cast, dressed, made up, and directed for the film and thus is a vital element in the mise-en-scene.
- Determining the physical relationship between the actor and the camera is referred to as blocking.



Gone With the Wind (1939)