

Costume and Research in Finland

National-level research seminar on Costume Design and related fields

A meeting of researchers based in Finland

Thursday 9 June 2022*

9:00 – 17:00 and book launch at 17:30

Lecture Hall B (B-sali), Main building, Otakaari 1

Aalto University, Otaniemi campus

(Aalto University metro station, exit B: Otaniementie)

*In 2022, *Costume and Research in Finland* is dedicated to the memory of costume designer Maija Pekkanen (1941-2021)

The seminar is organised by:

Costume in Focus Research Group

Department of Film, Television, and Scenography

School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Aalto University



Sofia Pantouvaki, PhD

Professor of Costume Design for Theatre & Film

Department of Film, Television and Scenography

Aalto University

Seminar Chair



Aalto University

Programme

9:00-9:10 **Welcome & Introduction,**
Sofia Pantouvaki, Professor of Costume Design, Aalto University

Session 1 (in English)

Chair: Sofia Pantouvaki, PhD, Professor of Costume Design for Theatre and Film, Aalto University

9:10-9:30 **Maarit Kalmakurki**, DA, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Digital costume design and the embodied experience of costume in animated character creation

9:30-9:50 **Jorge Sandoval**, DA, Course Leader BA (Hons) Costume for Performance, London College of Fashion (LCF), University of the Arts London (UAL)

My Doctoral dissertation and the development of teaching strategies for costume practice in undergraduate education

9:50-10:10 **Tua Helve**, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

The truth about 'Costume design and collaboration in Finnish contemporary dance in the early twenty-first century Finland', in 15 minutes

10:10-10:40 **Discussion**

10:40-11:00 **Coffee break**

Session 2 (in English)

Chair: Maarit Kalmakurki, DA, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

11:00-11:20 **Susanna Suurla**, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Sensing Matter – Making Meaning: exploring methods for devised material-led costume practice

11:20-11:40 **Ingvi Fossheim**, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

BioCostume reflections: towards wearing 'kin'

11:40-12:00 **Heini Granberg**, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Dressing up. Reflections on the role of transformation for young children in participatory performance

12:00-12:20 **Alexandra Ovtchinnikova**, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Experiential ethnography as a form of costume design practice in the film 'Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors' (dir. Sergei Parajanov, 1965)

12:20-12:50 **Discussion**

12:50–14:00 Lunch break (at participants' own cost)

Session 3 (in Finnish)

Chair: Tua Helve, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

14:00–14:15 Riina Leea Nieminen, MA, Costume Designer

Pukusuunnittelijan kommunikaatio työryhmässä taiteilijana sekä pukusuunnittelun sanaston kartoittamista ja luomista /The costume designer's communication as an artist in a working group and gathering and creating possible terms for the field of costume design

14:15–14:30 Iida Ukkola, MA, Costume Designer

Kun pukusuunnittelija luo tilaa - Puvun ja tilan vuorovaikutus, kommunikointi sekä puvun tilallisuus /When the costume designer creates space - interaction and communication between costume and space, and the spatiality of costume

14:30–14:45 Aino Simola, MA, Costume Designer

Eurooppalaisen paholaiskuvaston jalanjäljissä: Paholaisen kasvojen rakentaminen maskeerauksen keinoin pukusuunnittelijan näkökulmasta/ Making up the Devil: tracing European traditions of an evil face from the perspective of a costume designer

14:45–15:00 Suvi Hänninen, MA student, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Heijastusten leikki - käsinkosketeltavan esityspuvun vuoropuhelu virtuaalisen materiaalisuuden kanssa /Playing with reflections - the tangible costume in dialogue with virtual materiality

15:00–15:30 Discussion

15:30–16:00 Coffee break

Session 4 (in English)

Chair: Jorge Sandoval, DA, Course Leader BA (Hons) Costume for Performance, London College of Fashion (LCF), University of the Arts London (UAL)

16:00–16:20 Joanna Weckman, DA, Independent Researcher, Finland

Representations of Ethnic Minorities in Finnish theatre performances. Case: Sámi Dress – "Lapp" character

16:20–16:40 Sofia Pantouvaki, PhD, Professor of Costume Design for Theatre and Film, Department of Film, TV and Scenography, Aalto University

'It takes imagination and a creative mind to find ways to make a costume': insights in the costume makers' work in Greece

16:40–17:00 Discussion

17:00– Book launch and Reception – dedicated to the memory of Maija Pekkanen

19:00– Participants are welcome to join the team for an informal dinner!



In Memoriam – Maija Pekkanen

Maija Pekkanen was a deeply respected and well-liked teacher and costume designer in Finland and abroad. Maija was one of the pioneers of Finnish costume designers. After working very long and distinguishedly in Finland's largest theatre, the Helsinki City Theatre, she worked with many canonized directors of her days and later with many new generation names. She seemed modest and quiet, but in reality, she was very strong and wise and held many threads in her hands throughout the whole industry – including internationally. Maija always encouraged female colleagues very warmly to move forward in their career, even though she didn't actually stand on the 'barricades'.

Maija died peacefully in her sleep at the age of 80 after living a very rich life as a loyal friend of international colleagues, with many of us warmly grateful to her. She will always be remembered as a dynamic professional and international artist-ambassador.

Maija will be missed by many.

Maija Pekkanen (1941-2021) was a Finnish costume and set designer. She originally studied as a handicraft teacher (1961-1966) with the intention to teach at schools. Foreseeing a school reform in 1967, she accepted an offer from the Kuopio City Theatre, where her sister worked as a director, to design the costumes for a play called "Women". Following this work, she was offered the position of theatre costume designer for three years (1967-1970) where she designed 28 productions at the theatre's two stages.

Gradually, she became interested in studying the profession of the costume designer: "How to become an artist?", in her own words. During that time, one could not study costume design in Finland and the then chairman of the Finnish Performing Arts Association (LP), of which Maija had been a member since 1969, gave her information about the Academy of Performing Arts (Vysoká škola múzických umění) in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. Maija studied there for two years (1970-1972) – as the first of 8 Finnish costume designers. In her second year of study, she received an invitation to work at Helsinki City Theatre to design Ibsen's "The Wild Duck". This led to a 37-year career as Helsinki City Theatre's resident costume designer from 1972 until her retirement in 2009. She designed costumes for drama, musicals, dance, and other small-scale productions, and worked with 51 different stage directors. Concurrently, Maija Pekkanen taught costume design as a part-time teacher at the Fashion Department of the University of Art and Design in Helsinki from 1979 until 1997. Although the course was limited, it offered young designers a choice to study theatre costume design.

Maija Pekkanen has also served in many organizations in the field. In the 1970s, collective agreements to unite in the field of theatre were developed in Finland: "As a representative of a small profession, I was interested in the subject and so I became a trade union activist", she has said. She eventually became the first female chairperson of the Finnish Performing Arts Association from 1984 until 1988. She was a member of the international organization OISTAT (Organization Internationale des Scénographes, Techniciens et Architectes de Théâtre) where she served in the Executive Committee (1991 to 2007). Maija Pekkanen was a founder of the OISTAT Costume Design Group, interim president (1999-2001), and OISTAT's first female President from 2001 until 2005. She also chaired the Finnish OISTAT Centre from 1980 to 1984 and from 1988 to 2000.

Maija Pekkanen has been awarded with the Pro Finlandia Medal of the Order of the Lions of Finland in 1999; the medal of the 30th anniversary of the Finnish Theatre Association in 2001; OISTAT's "Golden Pin" in 2007; she was honoured by the OISTAT Costume Design Sub-commission during OISTAT's 50th Anniversary in 2018; and was Honorary member of the Finnish Association of Stage Artists (LP) and the Finnish OISTAT Centre. Her goal has been to develop her profession throughout her career, to promote education and appreciation of the field in Finland and internationally.

Session 1

Maarit Kalmakurki

Doctor of Arts

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Digital costume design and the embodied experience of costume in animated character creation

In my presentation I will give an overview of my recently published doctoral thesis and discuss a post-doctoral research idea that stems from the thesis findings. My doctoral thesis explored how digitally animated costumes are designed and how costumes connect to characters' personalities and narrative in six computer-animated films. My thesis proposed that costume designers are valuable collaborators within the production of computer-animated films, where their expert knowledge contributes to a character's tighter connection to the action via costume. Digital character costumes form the character's body and overall silhouette, which are essential for audience recognition of an animated character. The further research idea stems from the finding that the animator is often the central person who creates the character performance, defined by Wells (1998: 110) with the term "animator/actor." However, animation acting and performance typically fail to take into consideration character costume design, even though costume transfers embodied feelings for the wearer and is a central visual element of the animated character. Hence, my multidisciplinary post-doctoral research project idea aims to dive into this gap in animated filmmaking by investigating how physical costumes are, and can be, part of the different phases in animators' character and performance creation.

Biography

Dr. Maarit Kalmakurki received her Doctor of Arts degree from Aalto University in 2021, and her pioneering thesis investigated digital character costume design in computer-animated feature films. Her other research interests combine stage and film costume history, dress history and the use of technology in design processes. Since 2004, Maarit has been collaborating as a costume and set designer in multiple theatre, opera and film productions. .

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Session 1

Jorge Sandoval

Doctor of Arts

SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION, LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION (LCF), UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON (UAL)

My Doctoral dissertation and the development of teaching strategies for costume practice in undergraduate education

The section of my doctoral dissertation that directs the future development of my research explains that the way that costume signifies vis-à-vis the gendered body challenges the way we think of and make theatre. At the same time, it challenges notions of hetero-normativity, homo-normativity and the many other issues related to the performance of gender in society, on and off the stage. In my present role as educator and costume practitioner, I find this reflection from my doctoral studies becoming a bridge for the work I do in higher education. From my experience as Course Leader of the BA (Hons) Costume for Performance course at UAL, and as a researcher of costume, my reflections led me to consider a revision on processes and practices in the costume industry through a research project 'The Non-binary Costume'. Costume practitioners find themselves in professional wardrobes in theatre and film locations dealing with issues related to the lack of inclusivity and diversity in the ways that we treat non-binary bodies for costume making and designing, perpetuating the gender binaric system. I find that educational institutions need to implement tools that create inclusive ways to work with a neutral gender perspective rather than perpetuating the normative binaric gender narrative in costume making.

Biography

Dr. Jorge Sandoval is the Course Leader for the BA (Hons) Costume for Performance Course at the University of the Arts London, London College of Fashion. In 2021 Jorge received his Doctor of Arts degree with distinction from Aalto University, Department of Film, Television and Scenography in Helsinki, Finland. He holds an MFA in Theatre and Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Regina and a BFA in Art History and Studio Art from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Jorge actively researches and works with issues related to queer identity, theatre and performance. Jorge has published several articles on these topics for a variety of peer reviewed journals. In 2021 Jorge received a Special Project Funding grant from UAL to develop 'The Non-binary Costume' project and he will be leading a panel at World Stage Design '22 in Calgary, Canada.

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Session 1

Tua Helve

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

The truth about 'Costume design and collaboration in contemporary dance in the early twenty-first century Finland', in 15 minutes

At the time of writing, Tua is expected to submit and enter the pre-examination process for her doctoral thesis *Costume and collaboration in Finnish contemporary dance in the early twenty-first century Finland* during the same week as the *Costume and Research in Finland* seminar. This presentation hence provides fresh insights into Tua's research process with her thesis topic. The nature of the truth she plans to share remains to be experienced in the event of the presentation.

Biography

Tua Helve (MA) is a doctoral candidate in Costume Design at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Finland. Her research articles have been published in the journals *Studies in Costume & Performance* (2022, forthcoming), *Choreographic Practices* (2021), Finnish Theatre Research Society's *Näyttämö ja tutkimus* 8 (2020), *Nordic Journal of Dance* (2018) and *Scene* (2016). As a costume designer, Tua specializes in contemporary, process-based working methods. She belongs to the artistic team of the Helsinki-based international performance group *Oblivia*. As a visiting lecturer in Finland and abroad, Tua examines the topic of costume design within dance from multiple perspectives.

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Session 2

Susanna Suurla

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Sensing Matter – Making Meaning: exploring methods for devised material-led costume practice

Costume designers' innate understanding of materiality and its influence on the process of costume design is still mostly considered instinctive or tacit due to a limited understanding of the diverse embodied, cognitive, and socio-cultural aspects at play. To unpack these intuitive processes, my ongoing doctoral research at Aalto University (2021-25) shifts the focus from costume to the personal creative processes of costume designers and performers. It investigates how material engagement informs the processes of ideation and meaning-making in devised costume design and explores the potential of this engagement in building performative landscapes and narratives through costume. The research is built around two series of workshops that employ a devising methodology that sensitises the participants towards instinctive, associative meaning-making processes through embodied material engagement. These workshops focus on the participants' subjective working processes. The first series of workshops is aimed at professional designers and costume design students in Finland and abroad, and the second at performers working in contemporary dance. With this seminar presentation, I invite discussion and feedback from the Finnish costume community on the draft plans of the workshops aimed at costume designers by introducing the material-led and embodied approach, creative methodology, and data collection methods.

Biography

Susanna Suurla (MA) is a costume designer, doctoral candidate, and part-time Lecturer in Costume Design at Aalto University. Her artistic work and research explore the relationship between the embodied mind, matter and meaning-making in devised, material-led performance, employing different mediums of material engagement, including costume design, installation and video art.

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Session 2

Ingvill Fossheim

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

BioCostume reflections: towards wearing 'kin'

My presentation focuses on the costume practice and thinking that underpins my contribution to the theatre performance *Muohtadivggažat* (The sound of snow). This artistic practice informs my ongoing doctoral research, which explores how biobased colourants and biofabricated matter can afford aesthetic qualities to an artistic work, as well as induce meaning and value beyond the scope of the live performative event. *Muohtadivggažat* (The sound of snow), by Ferske Scener and The Sámi National Theatre Beaivváš, is a story of people and survival, of land and homeland. Its narrative centres on three generations of Skolt Sámi and weaves fictional characters together with real events that have unfolded over the past 80 years, within and across the landscape where Norway, Finland and Russia converge. As costume designer I wanted to bring my personal connection with homeland(s) into this performance context. By concentrating on two places that hold significance for me, specifically my childhood home in northern Norway/Sápmi and my current home in southern Finland, I explored ways of engaging with place-specific living organisms to generate costume colours that, through their material and immaterial dimensions, embody personal narrative and interspecies relations. Here I present selected research material that emerged through this process and discuss the current stage of theorizing based on this practice.

Biography

Ingvill Fossheim (MA) is a freelance costume designer and scenographer, and doctoral candidate at Aalto ARTS with the thesis 'BioCostume: Experimental Costume Design with Biobased Co-Actants'. Her artistic work and research seek to orient performance-making praxis towards more environmentally responsible, resilient and regenerative material approaches.

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Session 2

Heini Granberg

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Dressing up. Reflections on the role of transformation for young children in participatory performance

In this presentation I discuss the role of costume for child participants in an immersive performance installation event called The Castle. The Castle is the second artistic component of my ongoing doctoral research which concentrates on exploring collaboration with young children and their engagement with scenographic media in performance. In The Castle, child participants entered the main performance space through the dressing room area where they could prepare themselves with pieces of costume and objects to support their 'journey' during the performance. Aoife Monks suggests that dressing-up with costume creates a double vision of the actor's costumed body for both actors and spectators. In The Castle, child participants had the dual experience of costume as embodied, being costumed themselves, and as visual sensation, looking at the costumed bodies of others, at the same time. Here I evaluate the significance of transition and dressing up for child participants in relation to their engagement with the performance environment and narrativity.

Biography

Heini Granberg (MA) is a freelance scenographer and a doctoral candidate at Aalto ARTS. Her doctoral study "Experiential Space. Creating Scenographic Interpretations Through Children's World of Experience" explores, through a child-focused and embodied approach, how to engage young children in performing arts and participatory performance through scenographic media.

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Session 2

Alexandra Ovtchinnikova

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Experiential ethnography as a form of costume design practice in the film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (dir. Sergei Parajanov, 1964)

In this video essay I will address a particular aspect of my doctoral research, a work in progress, *Dressing Poetics: Costume in the Cinema of the Soviet Poetic School* (1960-1980), which explores the agency of costume in the films of four Soviet film directors: Sergei Parajanov, Andrei Tarkovsky, Yuri Ilienکو and Tengiz Abuladze. More specifically, I will share my examination of the work of the Soviet-Ukrainian costume designer Lidiya Baikova and her contribution to the film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (dir. Sergei Parajanov, cinematographer Yuri Illienکو, 1965).

Based on a folkloric legend, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, filled with music, dance, and ethnographic texture, celebrates the unique character of the Hutsuls, who inhabit the southeastern part of the Carpathian Mountains. In its search for the integration between the primitive and the modern form, the film departs significantly from the traditional representation of non-Russians on the Soviet screen under the ideologically charged Friendship of Peoples policy. By referring to the concept developed by film scholar J.J. Gurga, the 'Experiential Ethnographic Mode' of filmmaking, I will explore how the work of Lidiya Baikova awards ethnic dress, previously delegated to domesticated and melodramatic narratives, the status of a powerful and effective visual force and a fundamental substance of the cinematic experience.

Biography

Alexandra Ovtchinnikova (MA) is a freelance costume designer and doctoral candidate at Aalto University, Department of Film, Television and Scenography and a member of the Costume in Focus research group. Her research interests lie primarily in the area of film costume, specifically on the subjects of poetic and national cinema.

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Session 3

Riina Leea Nieminen

Independent Researcher, Finland

MA GRADUATE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

The Costume Designer's communication as an artist in a working group and gathering and creating possible terms for the field of costume design

Pukusuunnittelijan kommunikaatio työryhmässä taiteilijana sekä pukusuunnittelun sanaston kartoittamista ja luomista

Communication is a vital part of costume design, as designers work mostly in working groups. For this reason, one of the three focuses in my Master's thesis was on the costume designer as an artist and as a communicative team member. Since the result of costume design is that a costume is a shared art piece between the actor and the director, collaboration and communication are an inseparable part of costume design. I discuss the costume designer's role as an equal artist alongside the director and the collaboration between the costume designer and the actor. In addition, I discuss how communication influences working in a working group. I name different kinds of ways to dominate in communicative situations because recognising hierarchical communication constructions has become a vital tool for me. I suggest that situations will be resolved by verbalizing them out loud. I have suggested possible terms to be used in the field of costume design and gathered already known terms. My intent is to make the verbalization of costume design easier. These terms aim to work as a toolkit to help costume designers express themselves. My thesis examines and develops the information that is received through the verbalization of costume design. The aim is to expand costume design culture in a verbalized form. I have divided my thesis into three sections; costume, costume design, costume designer. This will be a presentation of the last main subject of my Master's thesis "Art of costume design and how to verbalize it – designing moments of the characters, costume design styles and communication as an artist in a working group".

This presentation is in Finnish.

Biography

Riina Leea Nieminen (MA) graduated from Aalto University in 2020, majoring in Costume Design. She also studied Costume for Performance at London College of Fashion during her exchange year 2017. Nieminen currently works as a freelance costume and set designer, and performer. Her recent projects have included costume and set design for Theatre Viirus's Pelikanen (2022), and Q-Theatre's Toksinen Kabaree (2021).

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Session 3

Iida Ukkola

MA student in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

When the costume designer creates space - interaction and communication between costume and space, and the spatiality of costume

Kun pukusuunnittelija luo tilaa - Puvun ja tilan vuorovaikutus, kommunikointi sekä

In this presentation I present my Master's thesis which address the communication and interaction between costume and space and the spatiality of costume in the context of the performing arts. The aim is to shed light on how costume is always a spatial element in the performance and how costume design is always spatial. The presentation illuminates ways through which a costume designer can act as a creator of space in a performance.

I start the presentation by examining the vocabulary I employ and define the most critical concepts for the thesis: costume, space, place, and the spatiality of performance, but also scenography. Through the concept of the scenographic costume, I present how the costume itself creates the premise, site, and space of the performance for both the performer and the audience. I examine the spatiality of costume through the intimate space it creates for the performer.

I present how costume (constantly changing its form through movement) shapes the atmosphere of the performance, how different kinds of spatial images can be created through costume and how costume leads to different places and domains of time. Through the concept of landscape, I suggest that costumes always create a social landscape in a performance that shapes the worldview it creates.

The presentation is in Finnish.

Biography

Iida Ukkola is a costume designer graduating with a Master's degree in Costume Design from Aalto University in spring 2022. Her work includes films and the performing arts, but she feels most creative working for the stage. Her work 'My Son Who Disappeared' can be seen as part of Tampere Theatre Festival 2022.

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Session 3

Aino Simola

Independent Researcher, Finland

MA GRADUATE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Making up the Devil: tracing European traditions of an evil face from the perspective of a costume designer

Eurooppalaisen paholaiskuvaston jalanjäljissä: Paholaisen kasvojen rakentaminen maskeerauksen keinoin pukusuunnittelijan näkökulmasta

In my master's thesis for Aalto University I looked into European traditions of portraying a mythological creature called the Devil. This was studied in relation to my own artistic work as a costume designer using make-up as a way of artistic expression and character building. There is little academic research conducted on the subject of make-up in the performing arts, which encouraged me to look further into the topic.

Many of the typical ways of portraying the faces of devils are connected to aggressive or deceitful facial expressions. Secondly, some of the features widely interpreted as "devilish" are grounded on the traditions of demonising one's enemies and marking them as "the other".

The research was conducted by analyzing the representations of devils through literature, visual arts and demonic characters presented on stage. This was then reflected in my own artistic work in a 2020 performance of Woland's Merry Companion.

The study points out the long traditions and historical layers behind stereotypes used today, many of which are unconscious. To me, as an artist, the most valuable contribution of the research was the understanding of how my own artistic work relates to the continuum of history and previously used ways of representation.

The presentation is in Finnish.

Biography:

Aino Simola (MA) is a freelance costume designer working in the field of performing arts. She graduated from the Department of Film, Television, and Scenography at Aalto University in 2021, but has been working in the field for nine years. She has a special interest in circus, children's theatre and immersive forms of performance.

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Session 3

Suvi Hänninen

MA student in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Playing with reflections - the tangible costume in dialogue with virtual materiality

Heijastusten leikki - käsinkosketeltavan esityspuvun vuoropuhelu virtuaalisen materiaalisuuden kanssa

I am presenting my study project that involved working with green screen and developing a costume design idea in this context. As 'virtual' seems to dominate our world in many ways, I wanted to immerse the very tactile nature of costume's material texture into working with green screen so that the material itself was the leading force and not simply the available technique in the studio. I was interested in how to create a costume space that is fluid and constantly on the move during the performative act. As a result I created a design that was born out of the dialogue with the cameras and in the act of shooting. In the project I also faced the question of how I, as a designer, can adapt to a new working environment even when lacking some skills that are usually considered necessary in the circumstances involved. As a student, I find this kind of immersive learning environment to be highly stimulating: it presents challenges in having to be able to control several unfamiliar aspects at the same time, it also gives the student new perspectives on how to think and learn creatively. As an inspiration for the design we worked on Italo Calvino's text Invisible Cities.

The presentation is in Finnish.

Biography

Suvi Hänninen has worked as a costume designer in the field of the performing arts, in productions as well as with independent artists, since 2003. Her work presents movement and sensorial experience in a particularly dynamic manner, with consciousness of the individual body at its core.

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Session 4

Joanna Weckman

Independent Researcher

DOCTORAL GRADUATE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Representations of Ethnic Minorities in Finnish theatre performances. Case: Sámi Dress – "Lapp" character

I present one of my recent studies discussing the ways in which the Sámi were represented in the early years of established theatre in Finland. This study is part of a wider ongoing research project discussing the representations of ethnicity in Finnish theatre performances, under which two articles are published so far with a new study currently underway. This project draws from the Foucauldian conception of ubiquitous power, constantly in motion and made visible by social relationships and human interactions, as well as from the theory of construction of cultural identity proposed by Stuart Hall who indicates how stereotypes are created by the exaggeration and simplification of certain features, establishing them without the possibility of change and development. Stereotypization maintains the social and symbolic order, excludes the inappropriate and different, and helps to create imaginary "normal" communities. Theatres, among others, are places where such imaginary communities have been constructed and made visible for audiences. Costumes have reflected explicit and implicit ideas about cultural hierarchies. By examining the practices related to creating ethnicity through the use of costume as well as representation of Finnish ethnic minorities, my aim is not only to expand the understanding of early Finnish theater and its substructures, but also to identify and make visible the historical strategies of exclusionary performance practices.

Biography

Dr. Joanna Weckman is an independent costume researcher, curator, lecturer and costume designer who has published several articles on the history of costume design and of costumes for stage and film in Finland since 2001.

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Session 4

Sofia Pantouvaki

Professor of Costume Design for Theatre and Film

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

'It takes imagination and a creative mind to find ways to make a costume': insights in the costume makers' work in Greece

This presentation introduces the work of costume makers in my home country, Greece, from 'inside the profession', that is, through their voices. It revisits two projects that I have undertaken on this topic. First, an exhibition dedicated to an independent maker, built around the maker's work with 12 different designers as an example of how makers interpret different concepts and contribute technically as well as artistically to a costume's outcome. Secondly, it presents select results from ethnographic research during which interviews were conducted with 28 cutters and seamstresses who have worked at the Greek National Opera costume workshop. This research revealed distinct features of the costume maker's profession in the Greek context, such as the fragmentation of labour, the organizational complexity and related hierarchies, the affinity with the fashion field, and the makers' training and working conditions (including the need to work up to an old age). The study of the costume maker profession offers material for further artistic as well as sociological inquiry as a gender and class experience. The scope of this presentation is to bring this non-visible area of theatrical labour into discussion with expert professionals who understand the topic from their own practice.

Biography

Dr. Sofia Pantouvaki is a scenographer (PhD) and Professor of Costume Design at Aalto University, Finland. Her background includes over 90 designs for theatre, film, opera and dance productions in European venues and international curatorial projects including the Finnish Student exhibit (Gold Medal PQ2015). She has led important initiatives for costume research including the founding of the Hellenic Costume Society (2003) and the Costume in Focus research group (2013). She is currently serving as Chair of Critical Costume, Vice-Head for Research OISTAT Costume Sub-commission and Editor of the international peer-reviewed journal *Studies in Costume and Performance*. She led the 'Costume Methodologies' research project (Academy of Finland, 2014-2018) and is lead editor of *Performance Costume: New Perspectives and Methods* (Bloomsbury, 2021).

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The seminar is organized by:



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Research Group

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