

# FILM PRODUCTION DESIGN:

PERIOD FILM

The term “period film” is generally applied to a story that takes place in a time before the present era.

The production designer deals with the physical reality of the screen story’s time frame.

*“History, cultural habits, and style are  
complex. “*

Political crisis 1973

Is not the same as

Political crisis 2013



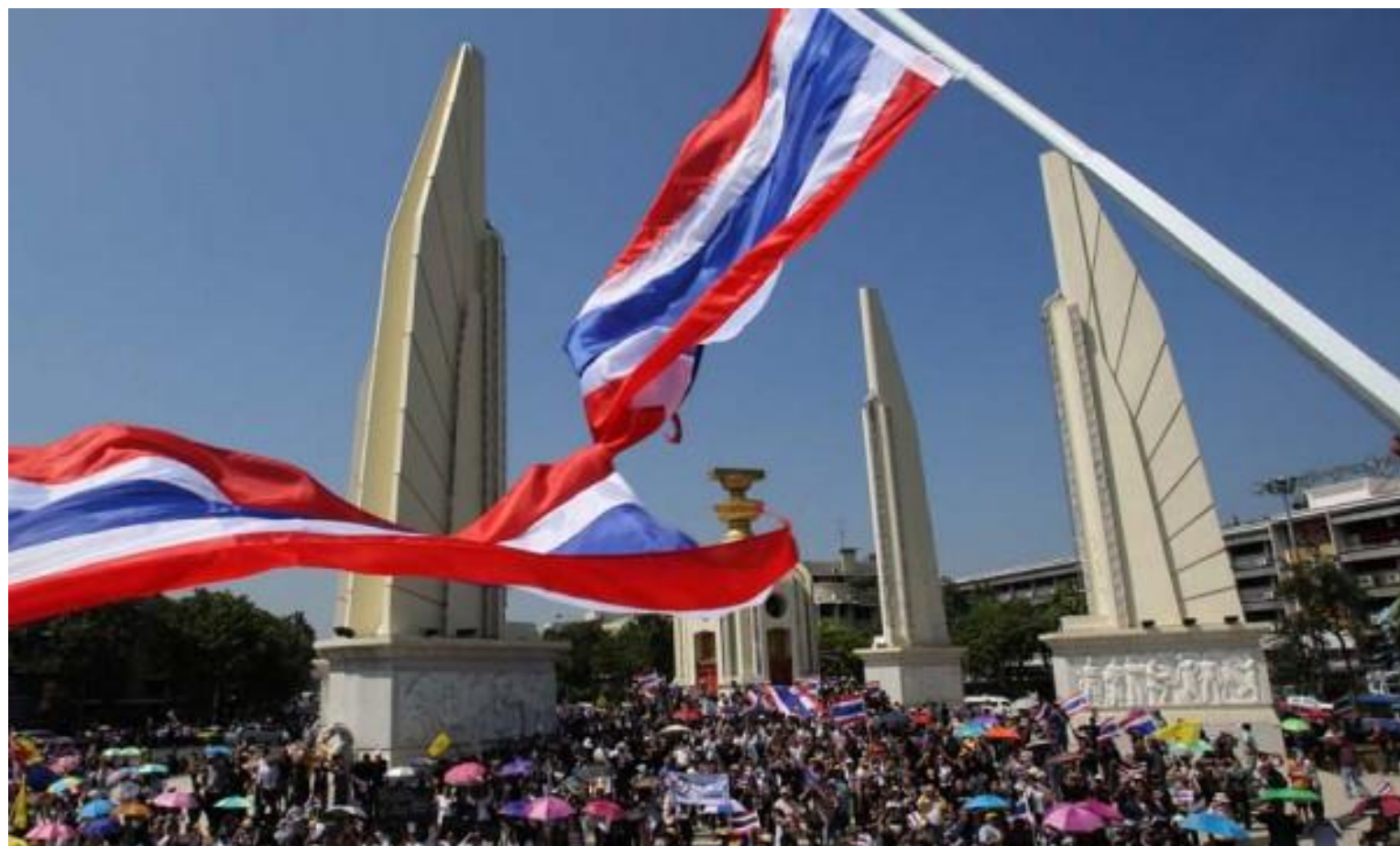


















# TIME

Often a screenplay states the time frame of the story to the year, month, day, and hour, but it can be less specific. Stories set in a timeless era are the hardest projects to design.

The majority of viewers will recognize décor, architecture, cultural trends, hair, and dress that will firmly plant a rootless story.

# Time and Place

To visually establish a sense of place, several factors must be determined.

- \_ *Where does the story take place?*
- \_ *What country, city, town, street?*
- \_ *Is it on the water, on an island, in the air, outer space, underwater, or in another universe?*
- \_ *Is it an imaginary land, like Oz or Pleasantville or The Hunger Game?*
- \_ *What is the scope of the environment?*
- \_ *Does the story take place in one room, an apartment, out of doors?*
- \_ *Are there contrasting settings, or is the mood and style consistent and connected?*

# HOME OR APARTMENT

The pictorial details that comprise film characters' home and apartment environments are crucial to the production designer. These items must be carefully considered so that they honestly interpret the script and the point of view established by the director.

## EXTERIOR STREET

Equally important are the architecture of apartment houses or homes, cars, vehicles, garbage cans, landscaping, signage, streetlights.

## LANDSCAPE

The outdoor areas of a set design also influence the mood, atmosphere, and descriptive qualities of the production



# RESTAURANT INTERIOR

Many film scenes take place in restaurants. Don't overlook this important venue in designing a set. Be sure to consider architecture, chairs, color of walls, condiments and bread on tables, décor, dinnerware, food served, host podium, ice buckets, napkins, reservation book, silverware, side table for desserts, staff dress, tablecloths, tables, wall coverings.

# *Barry Lyndon (1975)*

Director Stanley Kubrick

Production designer Ken Adam

Director of photography John Alcott

The eighteenth century was meticulously recreated through the study of paintings, architecture, and literature.

Most of the film was shot on location in Europe.

# *Boogie Nights (1997)*

Director : Paul Thomas Anderson

Production designer : Bob Ziembicki

Director of photography : Robert Elswit

Time-capsule accuracy capturing the 1970s, using the porn industry as a metaphor for family and the technological transition between film and video.

The 1970s design style of disco fashion and gaudy décor is accurate and realistic.

# *The Doors (1991)*

Director : Oliver Stone

Production Designer : Barbara Ling

Director of Photography : Robert Richardson

Film about Jim Morrison becomes a study of the Los Angeles rock and Hippie scene in the 1960s.

Concert venues are meticulously recreated.