

Film Production Design :

Pre Production

The pre-production process is a time of discovery and invention.
This is when the production designer and the art department develop ideas and create the blueprints for the design of the film.
The production designer enters a systematic process of planning stages to create the design of a film.

Concept Drawings

Concept drawings are impressions of the sets drawn with pencil, charcoal, or marker. Concept drawings put the visual ideas on paper.

They then are shown to the director for approval. Beginning with shapes in a sketchy, broad-stroked fashion, the designer is thinking out loud on paper.

Approval

After a presentation of the concept sketches, the director and the designer enter a discussion about the ideas. A single drawing may communicate and capture the director's intent, or elements from several drawings may be combined to achieve the design's objectives. An idea from a concept drawing may be altered or the designer may be sent back to the drawing board to come up with additional approaches.

Storyboards

Storyboards visualize a film shot by shot. The storyboard can be drawn by a storyboard artist who specializes in the craft or by someone who can visually interpret a story and understands cinematic grammar.

For the production designer, the storyboard will indicate how the design will appear in the frame and what has to be created by the design team.

After the concept drawings and specific design direction is agreed upon, more drawings, in pencil, pen, or marker are done; then a plan is made. A draftsman executes this architectural drawing. The construction crew will follow the drafting plan to build the set.

Models

Scale models of a set, which present the physicality of a set in three dimensions.

The construction crew can examine the architectural structure by studying a model. The model can be used to sell the design to producers to obtain financial resources. The director and director of photography can plan shots, camera positions, and the blocking of action by working with the model.

“When the set is constructed on the stage, it’s like walking into my model,” Asp explains.

Drafting

Drafting does not involve freehand drawing; it is a mechanical skill executed with pencils guided by a ruler, T-square, compass, and other tools that help produce precise and uniform lines for creating design plans. The purpose of drafting is to draw objects to be constructed.

Plans

A staging plan, used to visualize how the set is laid out on a sound stage, should include the following:

- The stage dimensions and space
- Where the set walls, platforms, and stairways are laid out
- Drawn and labeled furniture, rugs, and décor
- Indications of drops, backings, and cycloramas
- Labels for any scenery intended to fly
- The title block in the lower-right-hand corner

A floor plan is a view of all scenery. A platform plan, drawn in one-half-inch scale for the construction of platforms and stair units, should include the following:

- The breakdown of a larger platform built in smaller sections.
- Construction and material details.
- Any openings in the stage floor and platform.
- All dimensions.
- Radius of curved platforms.
- Moving platforms—type of casters, swivel or rigid—wheel diameter and caster height.
- Tracks, turntables, and control devices to move elements on the stage. Each element must be fully dimensioned.

If the project is being produced at a professional studio with sound stages, a basic studio plan can be obtained upon which you can overlay your set plans. The studio plan available from the studio where you are working will include:

- Location of studio entrances and exits
- Location of storage areas, dressing rooms, shop space, and restrooms
- Layout of power sources, electrical outlets, and water
- Rigging and hoists to raise lighting equipment and scenic pieces, as well as the track used to hang a cyclorama
- Blue screen/green screen for matte effects

Location Scouting

- *Name, address, phone number, and e-mail address of the owner.*
- *Parking availability.*
- *Back entrance for delivery and pick-up access.*
- *Freight doorways.*
- *Stairways.*
- *Elevators.*
- *Doorways.*
- *Location of restrooms, dressing areas.*
- *Diagram of location floor plan.*
- *Floor and ceilings.*
- *List all equipment that can be supplied by the location owner.*

- *Note any construction projects taking place in the area.*
- *Note what days and time surrounding lawns are mowed.*

Organizing the Property Department

- Personal props are worn or directly used by the actors—eyeglasses, rings, and wallets, for example
- Props such as appliances that are not used on camera are listed as non practical. They do not have to be in working condition, just look like they can operate.
- Hand props are used by the actors—for instance, wineglass, cigarette lighter, and telephones.
- Practical props are fully operational and in working order.
- Any prop that is not directly used or operated by the actors does not have to be practical.
- Key props that are often used or visible should be backed up with replacements in case they're needed during production. The back up props must be an exact match not to disturb continuity.

Final Steps of Pre-production

The production designer goes through the compositions, lenses to be used, and planned camera movements, making sure that the set supports all angles to be employed.

- Are there any hot spots?
- Any reflections? Glass, shiny, and mirrored
- Are the colors too dark, too light?
- Will the camera cables or equipment obstruct a shot?
- Are the details on all surfaces the right pictorial balance?
- The placement of every piece of furnishing should be checked. Is the environment too busy or too sparse? Is it effective from every camera position?

- What is the overall impact of the set? Is it too dark, producing an oppressive impression, or too light, causing the surroundings to look vacant?
- Is the set completely stable and safe for the cast and crew?
- Doors and windows should be checked for sticking and mobility problems by the construction crew.
- The props are checked for arrangement, placement, color, texture, and authenticity by the prop master.
- The aging is adjusted so the set doesn't look too old or new for the story.
- The height and brightness of all practical lighting fixtures should be adjusted.

- Is the furniture stable? Are the actors able to work with it comfortably?
- Does the set work for the characters, performers, and story?

Deadlines

The art department should estimate the time every step will take, so a starting date can be determined by backdating everything involved.

- How much time will it take to acquire all materials necessary to build the sets?
- How long will it take to get all of the props, furniture, and décor?
- How long will it take the construction crew to build the set?
- How long will it take to transport the set to a studio, assemble it, and secure everything for the first day of shooting?

Other aspects that affect the art department schedule include:

- Riggings for the cinematography team
- Special effects that concern the set, such as fire, water, explosions, gun shots, snow, and digital effects
- Tests for camera: lighting, color, and texture
- Tests for special effects
- Tests and accommodations for sound

Pre-production Advice

- Schedule plenty of time for the pre-production phase of the project
- Don't shoot until you are totally prepared
- Have as much backup and as many alternate plans as possible
- Plan for cover sets where the company can shoot in the event of inclement weather
- Check and recheck everything
- Read the screenplay again with an objective eye for perspective, details, and clarity toward the production design of the project

Yohei Taneda (1960 – Present)



Filmography

- 2012 “Kiyosu Kaigi” (Directed by Kohki Mitani)
- 2012 “Man of Tai Chi” (Directed by Keanu Reeves) American-Chinese Film
- 2011 “The Assassins ; Tong que tai” (Directed by Zhao Lin-shan) Chinese Film
- 2011 “The Flowers of War ; Jing Ling Shi San Chai” (Directed by Zhang Yimou) Chinese Film
- 2010 “A Ghost of a Chance” (Directed by Kohki Mitani)
- 2010 “Warriors of the Rainbow ; Seediq Bale” (Directed by Wei Te-Sheng) Taiwanese Film
- 2009 “Villain” (Directed by Lee-Sang Il) 2008 “VILLON’S WIFE” (Directed by Kichitaro Negishi) 2008 “AIR DOLL” (Directed by Hirokazu Koreeda)
- 2008 “AMALFI” (Directed by Hiroshi Nishitani)

- 2007 "DANCE SUBARU" (Directed by Lee Chi Ngai)
- 2007 "The Magic Hour" (Directed by Kohki Mitani)
- 2006 "KAIDAN; Japanese Ghost Story" (Directed by Hideo Nakata)
- 2006 "Hula Girls" (Directed by Lee-Sang Il)
- 2005 "SILK ; Gui si" (Directed by Su-Chao Pin) Taiwanese Film
- 2005 "Suite Dreams" (Directed by Kohki Mitani)
- 2004 "Heart, Beating in the Dark" (Directed by Shunichi Nagasaki)
- 2004 "BE WITH YOU" (Directed by Nobuhiro Doi)
- 2003 "69 sixty nine" (Directed by Lee-Sang Il)
- 2003 "HANA AND ALICE" (Directed by Shunji Iwai)
- 2002 "KILL BILL Vol.1" (Directed by Quentin Tarantino) American Film

- 2002 "INNOCENCE ; Ghost in the Shell 2" (Mamoru Oshii) Animation Film
- 2001 "FILAMENT" (Directed by Jinsei Tsuji)
- 2001 "BETWEEN CALMNESS AND PASSION" (Directed by Isao Nakae)
- 2000 "HOTOKE" (Directed by Jinsei Tsuji)
- 1999 "SHIKOKU" (Directed by Shunichi Nagasaki)
- 1999 "SENNEN TABITO" (Directed by Jinsei Tsuji)
- 1998 "DOGS" (Directed by Shunichi Nagasaki)
- 1998 "SLEEPLESS TOWN" (Directed by Lee Chi Ngai)
- 1997 "HONG KONG DAIYASOKAI ; TOUCH&MAGGIE" (Directed by Takayoshi Watanabe)
- 1996 "Swallowtail Butterfly" (Directed by Shunji Iwai)

- 1995 "SOME KINDA LOVE" (Directed by Shunichi Nagasaki)
- 1994 SMAP "AIRPLANE BROTHERS" (Directed by Hisashi Saito)
- 1994 "ZERO WOMAN : FINAL MISSION" (Directed by Hisashi Saito)
- 1989 "JULIET GAME" (Directed by Shoji KOKAMI)
- 1989 "HONNO 5g" (Directed by Kei Ohta)
- 1988 "JUST TWO OF US" (Directed by Koji Enokido)
- 1986 "1/2 Man" (Directed by Sogo Ishii)
- 1984 "ABNORMAL FAMILY" (Directed by Masayuki Suo)