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MYSTERIOUS EFFECTS WITH TEXTILE

As contemporary productions are dominated by light, video and special effects, more and more scenographers and production managers make creative use of textiles on stage. In addition to an increased demand for holography, there is a major shift going on in the way this effect is created.

Those who used to amaze their audience with a Pepper's Ghost magic needed special mirror foils, large frames and, above all, a lot of space and patience. Today, scenographers are often opting for gauzes and scrims to create that same result. Projecting onto mesh fabrics is much easier and above all more flexible than the classic mirror setup. Theatres are increasingly opting for projection mesh on stage, but also for touring performances, holography has now become a feasible option.

Besides the constantly evolving technology itself, the combination of different scenic fabrics and techniques opens up many new possibilities. By bringing movement into a set or by combining multiple layers of fabric, you can create effects that truly captivate an audience. Not the materials, but creativity seems to be the biggest limit nowadays.

WHAT ABOUT BUDGET?

In an entire experience, the stage fabrics are often only a fraction of the total budget, while they can truly make or break the effect completely. Even with the latest projectors, a stunning venue and impressive imagery, you will not get anywhere if the projection surface is not tailored to the desired effect.

In the end, there's a qualitative option for every budget, as long as you manage expectations. Projecting onto classical theatre scrims, for example, can be stunning, even if it has a lower resolution output than an advanced holographic gauze such as PepperScrim. It all depends on the projected content and the desired result.

Those who match their expectations to their budget and get creative with the resources available can work wonders. But even the fabrics keep evolving as well. The quality of today's projection meshes and the ever-increasing sizes in which they are seamlessly available makes them more popular than ever. Especially in combination with creativity, these developments provide

scenographers with endless possibilities to ensure the best quality of their visuals and special effects.

ECO - THE LATEST CHALLENGE OF THE INDUSTRY

Working in the theatre industry, unfortunately, means quite some fabric waste is generated. Apart from the fact that many projects are temporary shows, there is a variety of reasons why the curtain confection process produces waste material. Theatres often require a bespoke velvet colour to match the branding of the venue or the colour of the seats. After creating these custom-dyed drapes, offcut rolls often end up in the warehouse, waiting for that one project that requires that exact same colour of fabric and just the right amount of leftover material. After lying on the shelf for some time, these fabrics are considered lost.

At ShowTex, they strive to manage this waste material according to the principles of reduction, re-use and recycling. The company started an ecology workgroup, adopted sustainable operational practices, invested in a greener infrastructure, created a recycling program for fabric waste from its workshops and even launched the first range of eco-friendly stage drapes in the industry.

Let's hope these initiatives will encourage other industry professionals to reflect on reusability, upcycling and sustainability topics as well, because there is only one way forward: going green together, as a team.

LIGHTS OFF, SPOT ON - IT'S TIME FOR MAGIC

This age-old principle is still one of the basic foundations of ShowTex. With over 35 years of experience in fire-rated stage textiles, curtain tracks and motion systems, the company brings to life boundless creative theatre and set designs every day. And not just with the classic black and red theatre curtains. From mirror foils, projection screens and stretch materials to inflatable fabrics, printed drapes, roll-up and reveal systems, the effects and moods you can create with specialised theatre fabrics are endless these days. Even more so, when you add light and movement to the scene. ☺





foto: Annemieke van der Togt