

Phase 2

Set Dressing Training Program

Objective: To train Connecticut residents in the basic duties and practices of the set dressing department, including set decoration, buying and pre-production and on-set job descriptions, along with additional training in applicable construction and installation techniques.

Program Synopsis: The first week will involve an overview of the entire department, along with lessons on the duties of the set decorator, buyer, lead man and all members of the set dressing department in prep (pre-production), during shooting and during wrap (post-production).

The second week will involve hands-on experience in set dressing and techniques, emphasizing the details necessary for mastering the diverse and essential skills in this department.

The following lesson plan defines specific subjects to be covered in the training program and is required as a basis for instruction for each component. Within the described daily and weekly framework of the program, the instructor is encouraged to supplement the curriculum as he/she sees fit.

Because all feature film positions and departments are not currently included in the training program, the use of guest speakers is encouraged as an enhancement to the lesson plan. Recommended guest speakers for the Set Dressing Training Program include directors, production designers and accountants.

Required Text: The Backstage Handbook: An Illustrated Almanac of Technical Information, by Paul Carter, Third Edition, Broadway Press, 1994.

Week One, Day One

9:00-10:25am

Simple Aptitude Test

- Measure trainees' current knowledge
- Names of tools
- Picture of list of tools

Review of Aptitude Test

- Instructor will go over each question
- Introduction of most commonly used tools

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

10:35-12:00pm: Description of the Department (Part 1)
Job Categories

- Set Decorator
 - Works with production designer to realize vision
 - Responsible for creative furnishing of set
 - “Boards” for selection of color, texture, style
 - Pays attention to small character details
 - Research, preparation and oversight
 - Attention to design aesthetics
 - Commissions art work & model-makers
 - Detailed breakdown of shoot schedule
 - Creates “punch” list for lead man
- Assistant Decorator/Buyer
 - Definitive list from Set Decorator
 - Locates, purchases or rents set dressing
 - Product placement
 - Copyright clearances
 - Maintains vendor contacts
 - Checks for missing items

12:00-1:00pm: Lunch

1:00-5:00pm: Description of the Department (continued)

- Qualities of Decorator & Buyer
 - Knowledge of history, design, and decoration
 - Graduates of Art, Interior or 3D Design courses
 - Significant experience film and/or theatre
 - Attention to detail & creative flair
 - Good sense of color and form
 - A methodical approach to work
 - Effective coordinator & team player

Job Categories (continued)

- Lead Man
 - Organizer and manager of department
 - Hires crew & makes UPM deals
 - Liaison between set decorator & crew
 - Oversees shipments & special orders
 - Maintains accuracy of paperwork
 - Catalogs photos of purchases & rentals
 - Visits all sets and delegates tasks
 - Supplies all tools for department
 - Keeps department on schedule
- On-Set Dresser
 - Works exclusively on set
 - Represents Production Designer & Decorator
 - Oversees set activities & maintains artistic vision
 - Works directly with property department
 - Moves set dressing to camera
 - Monitors continuity w/ script supervisor
 - Responds to requests immediately
- Set Dressers (Swing Gang)
 - Transport & takes delivery of set dressing

- Execute instructions of Decorator & Lead Man
- Leapfrog pattern throughout the shoot
- Test and rewire all practical electrical fixtures
- Preps and protects location
- Strikes the set and restores location
- Involves heavy manual labor

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook.

Week One, Day Two

9:00 – 10:25am: Related Departments

- Greens
 - Can be separate department (LA)
 - Specialty of single dresser (NY)
 - Research foliage & habitats
 - Procure, place, & maintain vegetation
 - Transform location to fit script requirements
 - Work with surfaces, stone, wood
 - Landscape inside a studio
 - “Greening out”
 - Assure continuity during shoot

- Drapery
 - LA On Stage = Separate department
 - NY = Specialty of single dresser
 - Installs drapery and curtains per Decorator
 - Knowledge of basic treatments & hardware
 - Roller shades
 - Curtains
 - Shears
 - Rods
 - Draw shades
 - Valences

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

10:35 – 12:00pm Skill sets

Qualities of a Set Dresser

- Strong do-it-yourself skills
- Meticulous attention to detail
- Organizational skills
- Imaginative approach to work
- Ability to solve problems creatively
- Spatial awareness and a sense of design
- Ability to work to deadline
- High standards of accuracy

- Team player

Working with a Production Designer

- Respect for authority
- Understand the designer's vision
- Implementing that vision
- Dealing with multiple changes

12:00-1:00pm: Lunch

1:00-5:00pm: Other Elements

Locations vs. Stage

- Differences for set dressing
- Maintenance and cleaning

Transport & Load-in of dressing

- Challenges each one presents
- Protection of property
- Social skills
- Reassure owner

Moving Furniture

- On and off the set
- Moving during shoot
- Lift tables from skirt
- Lift chairs from base
- "Cheating"

Continuity (On-set Dresser)

- Photos from camera perspective
- During first or second take
- Label by scene number and set
- Work with script supervisor

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook.

Week One, Day Three

9:00 – 10:25am Life in the movie industry

Committed realities

- Working as a freelance contractor
- Hours and schedules
- Professionalism on set
 - With crew
 - With actors
 - With continuity

- The importance of a good personality
- Stress management

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

10:35 – 12:00pm: Pre-production

Production Office

- Production Office Coordinator (POC)
- Assistant Production Office Coordinator (APOC)
- UPM negotiations
 - Crew size & Man Days
 - Kit Rental
 - Expendables
- Budgets

Accounting

- Production Accountant
- Assistant Production Accountant
- Purchase Orders
- Check Requests
- Petty cash
- Setting up accounts
- Dealing with payments
- Payroll

12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch

1:00 – 5:00pm: Preproduction (Continued)

Art Department

- Production Designer
- Art Director

Locations Department

- Location Manager
- Property owners
- Set Dressers integral to process

Set Dressing Pre-Production

- Script Breakdown
- Planning & organization
- Scouting
- Consultation
- Research
- Buying

The Production Meeting

- Being prepared
- Being professional
- Everyone is involved
- Staying on the same page
- Asking questions
- Preparing for schedule changes

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook

Week One, Day Four

9:00 – 10:25am: Pre-Production (continued)

Rental Houses

- What's ordered where
- Dealing with vendors
- Bargaining
- Copyright infringement

Cover Sets

- Planning for
- Shooting Schedule
- Call Sheets
- Rain cover
- Short notice

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

10:35am – 12:00pm: Production, Part 1

On-set Dresser Relationships

- Director
- Assistant Directors
- Director of Photography
- Other departments
 - Grip
 - Electrics
 - Camera
 - Sound
 - Wardrobe
 - Hair & Makeup
 - Transportation

12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch

1:00 to 5:00pm: Production (continued)

On-set Personnel & Relationships

- Producers
- Actors
 - Principals
 - Extras
- Personal Assistants
- Guests
- Special Hires
 - Stuntmen
 - Firemen
 - Police

The Call Sheet

- Scene progression
- Contingency planning
- Keeping Ahead of the camera

Set Etiquette

- Rolls and Cuts
- Sight lines
- Telling the truth
- “Hollywooding” Furniture

On-Set Presence

- Constant availability
- Janitorial duties

On-Set Relationships

On –Set Heirarchy

- Producer
- Director
- First Assistant Director
- Director of Photography
- Production Designer
- Star Power

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook.

Week One, Day Five

9:00 – 10:25am: Crew Relationships with On-set Dresser

- Property Master
- Other Department Heads
- Camera
- Sound
- Electric
- Grip
- Stunts

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

10:35-12:00pm: IATSE Protocol

Union Contracts

- East Coast vs. West Coast
- Low Budget
- High Budget

On-Set Issues

- Call Sheets
- Meal Penalties
- Wrap
- Overtime
- Turnaround

Shop Steward

- What the job is
- Why it's important

12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch

1:00-5:00pm: Continuity

The Script Supervisor

- What the script supervisor does
- How to interact with one
- Where your jobs overlap
- How you can help each other
- Script notes to maintain continuity

Set Dressing Continuity

- What is Set Dressing vs. Props?
- Set Dressing Elements that Affect Continuity

Keeping Track of the Scene

- Photographs
- Taking notes
- Using sides to maintain continuity

Practical Exercises in Continuity

- Instructor will demonstrate On-Set Dresser Role
- Moving and Marking furniture
- Taking measurements
- Noting camera positions
- Repositioning furniture for camera
- Reverse angles
- Retakes and reshoots

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook.

Week Two, Day One

9:00 – 10:25am Essential Tools

Lead Man's Kit

- Electrical kit
- Plumbing Kit
- Glass Kit
- Multiple Dollies
- Hand trucks
- Hand tools
- Power saws
- Drills
- Ban saw
- Grinder
- Planer
- Belt sander
- Drill Press
- Ladders
 - 4,6,8,10,15 Steps

- Extension 40' & 20'
- Vacuums
 - Shop vac
 - Carpet sweeper
 - Standard upright

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

On-Set Dresser Kit

- Tool Belt
 - Leatherman/Gerber
 - Flashlight
 - Tape measure
 - Note pad
 - Digital camera
 - Cell phone

- On-set Kit (Portable Rolling Unit)
 - Hammers
 - Small sledge
 - Rubber mallet
 - Hand saws
 - Hacksaw
 - Screwdrivers (all formats)
 - Wrench Set
 - Standard
 - Metric
 - Ratchet Set
 - Standard
 - Metric
 - Allen wrench set
 - Drill bit index
 - Wood
 - Metal
 - Masonry
 - Torpedo Level
 - Pliers
 - Needle Nose
 - Channel lock
 - Vise grips
 - Tin snips
 - Cordless Power tools
 - Drill
 - Hammer Drill
 - Grinder
 - Builder's saw
 - Steamer
 - Security bits
 - Plumbing tools
 - Glass cutting tools
 - Chisels
 - Files

- Scissors
- Staple guns
- Stud sensor
- Wonderbar
- Crowbar
- Four wheel Dolly x2
- Brooms
 - Fine bristle
 - Coarse bristle
 - Corn broom
 - Dust mop
 - Sponge mop

12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch

1:00-5:00pm: Essential Materials

- Fasteners
 - Screws
 - Nails
 - Hangers
 - Anchors
 - Toggle bolts
 - TapCons
- Hanging hardware
 - Picture frames
 - Sconces
 - Kitchen items
 - Bathroom items
 - Heavy objects
 - Building a strongback
 - Mounting to set wall
- Cleaning products
 - Metal
 - Glass
 - Plexiglass
 - Furniture polishes
 - Floor
 - Carpets
 - Upholstery
 - Staying ahead of shots
- Tapes
 - Gaffer
 - Black
 - Silver
 - Paper tape
 - Painters tape
 - Packing tape
 - Double-stick
 - Velcro
 - Camera tape
 - Camera department uses

- Set dresser uses
- Attention to stray tape on camera

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook.

Week Two, Day Two

9:00 – 10:25am The Set Dressing Shop

Setting up a shop

- Shelving
- Labels by set
- Sharing the space
- Security
- Work areas
 - Tools
 - Packing
 - Materials
- Deliveries and unpacking
 - Packing lists
 - Inventories
- Laying out items according to set
- Furniture storage

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

Knots

- Trucker's Hitch
- Clove Hitch
- Bowline
- Slip knot
- Square knot
- Fisherman's knot

12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch

1:00 – 5:00pm: Transportation

Setting up a Truck

- Departmental trucks
 - Prop truck
 - Set dressing truck
 - Swing truck
 - SPFX truck
 - Greens truck
- Drivers
 - East Coast vs. West Coast
 - NY Teamsters
 - Do it Yourself
- Standard Truck Sizes

- Diagrams of the truck
- Balancing the load
- Organizational logic
- Strategize for offloading
- Compartments & Containers
 - Accessibility
 - Placement of items
 - Mirrors & Glass
- Securing a truck
 - Packing logic
 - Blankets
 - Rolling damage
- Moving stuff around
 - Dollies
 - Hand trucks
 - Appliance dollies
 - Pallet jacks
 - Fork lifts

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook.

Week Two, Day Three

9:00 – 10:25am Other Required Skills

- Windows. Glass, Mirrors, and Frames
 - Glass vendors
 - Glass cutters & oils
 - Glazing windows
 - Pointing glass into frames
 - Suction cups
 - Packing & Protection

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

- Assembling Frames
 - Stretching canvas
 - Not too wet

10:35 – 12:00pm: Special Skills

- Flooring Demonstration
 - Vinyl and Linoleum
 - How to cut
 - Linoleum knife vs. hook blade
 - Templates
 - Set walls – Before & After
 - Mastic
 - Types of trowels

12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch

- Carpeting Demonstration
 - Wall to wall
 - How to cut
 - Loop pile cutter
 - Wall edge cutter
 - Kickers
 - Tack strips

1:00-5:00pm Special Skills (continued)

- Tile Setting Demonstration
 - Floors vs walls
 - Using a tile saw
 - How to trowel
 - Types of thin-set
 - Mixing thin-set
 - Types of grout
 - Floating grout
 - Grout sponge
 - Removing haze
 - Clean up during shoot

Homework: Assigned reading from [The Backstage Handbook](#).

Week Two, Day Four

9:00 – 12:00pm Special Skills (Continued)

- Electrical Demonstration
 - Wiring outlets
 - Wiring over head lights
 - How to re-wire lamps
 - Wire gauge and load
 - 18 gauge zip cord
 - Add-a-taps and quick plugs.
 - Conduit and junction boxes
 - Neon lights and transformers
 - Strain relief

10:25 – 10:35am: Break**12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch****1:00 – 5:00pm: Special Skills (continued)**

- Plumbing Demonstration
 - On-set practical fixtures
 - Hose connections
 - Drainage receptacle
 - Sinks and shower fixtures

- Recycling water
- Fencing Presentation
 - Gas powered post hole diggers.
 - How to keep posts in line.
 - Hurricane fences
 - Using stretchers

Homework: Assigned reading from The Backstage Handbook.

Week Two, Day Five

9:00 – 10:25am: Post Production and Wrap

Finishing up

- Inventory of Items
 - By character
 - By scene
- Archiving
- Wrapping Hero Sets
- Re-shoots
- Sequels
- Product Placement
- Purchases
- Sale of items

10:25 – 10:35am: Break

10:35-12:00pm: Post Production and Wrap (continued)

Paperwork

- Balancing department budget
 - Closing out accounts
 - Resisting temptation to increase your kit
- Unloading truck
- Storing items

12:00 – 1:00pm: Lunch

3:00 – 5:00pm: Final Exam –

- Written Test (questions from):
 - Class lectures
 - Homework reading
 - New York Production Guide