

Abhinaya

“system of dramaturgy”

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Project 1

Visual Communications

INDEX

1. Introduction

- Introduction to theatre
- Reason for training in theatre

2. Content

- My work
- My observations
- IDC teachings:
For the better understanding and learning the art of theatre
- My documentation of my observations

3. Conclusion

- End note

Introduction:

Theatre - Abhinaya, the ancient Indian system of dramaturgy.

This performing art of theatre as the dictionary defines,” The activity or a profession of acting , producing, directing or writing plays” is an art form which has a beautiful pattern of planned design of actions.

Its a form of extensive team work in which the efforts of each and every member of the production matter a lot for the success of the play, the irony of the situation being that every action of every person who is the part of the production are mainly governed by the director of the play. The entire system depends on the directors play of actions. This art form includes the most important and basic elements of design i.e. lines, plane, textures, colour, space, shape and form.

This performing art has always fascinated me and the aim of doing my training in theatre was to understand and practise by observing and exploring, the elements of design in theatre.

Content

My Work

During the starting of my training i participated as a volunteer in the Shanmukhananda Multilingual and Children's festival. Being a volunteer i could be involved in all the technical rehearsals of all the plays being staged in the festival which helped me understand the different narrative styles, the different genre's of the plays that exist and most importantly the technicalities of the entire system. The learning experience with each group was very enriching and unique.

While working as a volunteer i got the opportunity to work with a few technicians which helped me understand the basics of the important elements like light, sound and organizing the set. I worked on the basic and minor details and the organization of set in a few plays namely:

1. Cotton 56, Polyester 84

Written by Mr. Ramu Ramanathan

Directed by Mr. Sunil Shanbag

2. Jungle Me Mangal

By Mr. Arun Kakde

3. Mahadevbhai

Written and Directed by Mr. Ramu Ramanathan

4. Agar Ya Magar

Written by Gulzar

Directed by Salim Arif

5. Kahani Le Lo

Written by Anupama Chandra

Directed by Dhanendra Kawade

In the mentioned plays i worked while learning the small details and importance of the following:

1. Lights

The role of lights is one of the most important factors in determining the narration of the play being staged i.e. to say that it conveys the importance of certain characters, actions and elements with the monitor of its density and sharpness. It also in some plays determines the mood and atmosphere to be generated in the moment of action. A certain control over the lights could enhance the complete experience of absorbing the play. Sometimes certain plays are made only on emphasizing the lights, the meaning of various colour lights being used for e.g.. red light could show anger.





2. Sound

The entire story or narration or script sometimes is completely dependent on the music and sound design. The musical plays leave a strong impact on the audience for e.g. Kahani Le lo, a play of selected tales from the Panchtantra are delightfully presented to the audience through music, dance and vibrant characters.

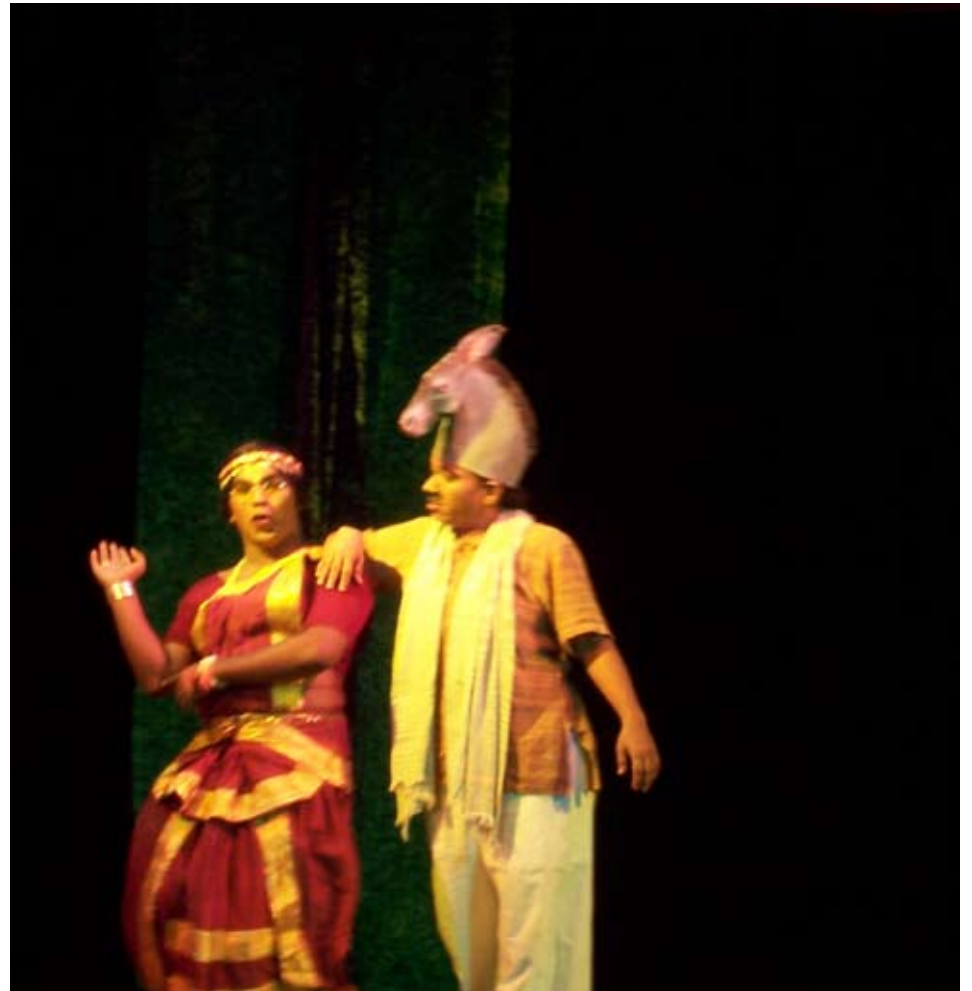




3. Costume

It signifies a lot in the recognitions and relation to the character.

It helps in determining a character's lifestyle, nature, way of thinking, social and economic background and at many times the understanding the situation and purpose of actions. A good example would be of the Marathi play "Jungle Me Mangal" in which all the male characters are dressed in female outfits and vice versa.



4. Set

The arrangement of various props and objects required to enhance the acting and narration are very carefully selected and minutely thought about. They help to understand the entire space of the narration and situation and play an important role in some actions of the character. An interesting e.g. would be of Mahadevbhai in which the actor has played historical characters of Gandhiji, Mahadevbhai, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, among others.







During the end of my training i attended a workshop titled "B.E.S.T" by Mr. Ramu Ramanathan in Kamale Raheja College which was based on the best buses in Mumbai. During that workshop i worked on some narrations and scripts on the short stories discovered and written with personal experiences of and about the best buses by all the group members.

My Observations

During my one month training a saw a lot of theatre performances of which i was a part of the technical rehearsals of 12 plays. I got an opportunity to observe various aspects of theatre and study the structure of design which exist in the performing art. With my observations i could make a structure of how the system mostly works and the design actions that follow in each of them. I also closely observed the aesthetics of performance in terms of gestures, appearance and also the "vacika" i.e. the abhinaya, overall design of plays i.e observing the interplay between actors and the stage and performance and auditorium.

A PLAY PRODUCTION

An Idea

(it could be by reading a narrative, novels, articles, facts etc.
or getting inspired by nature and surroundings)

Play Writer

(Inspired by the idea the writer writes the play in the form of a
story, most of the times in form of a script which narrates the idea in detail)

Producer

(Sponsor of the play
basically the idea has
to appeal the producer for
him/her to invest into it)

Director

(Who holds the most important
part of the system as the
entire play and people
related to the play are
dependable on his decisions
for one and all things)

DIRECTOR

(He is the one who governs the design of the actions, spaces, people, expression, speech, volume)

Actors

Technicians

- light
- sound n music
- elements on stage

Designers

- set
- costume
- backdrop

Space





My Learnings and Documentation

- IDC teachings:

For the better understanding and learning of theatre

Through the learning process in IDC i learned from my understanding in the performing art of theatre as designing to be an organised process that deals with expression of ideas, feelings and thoughts which is created by the basic elements and functions of line, form, space, texture, colour, shape, volume, harmony, contrast, rhythm and movement and unity.





Conclusion

My experience during the month of training was really useful as i wanted to continue working in the same field for my next project i.e. exploration in theatre and here i would like to thank my professors at IDC to have given me the opportunity and freedom to do the same also i am very grateful to Mr. Ramu Ramanathan for sharing his learnings and thoughts on theatre with me and spending his valuable time in guiding me in the right direction.