

**THE IMPACT OF SET DESIGN AND SCENOGRAPHY ON THE THEATRICAL  
ENVIRONMENT**

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the role of theatrical set design and scenography in contemporary theater art as a crucial component in revealing the theme and idea of a performance and in fully conveying the director's artistic intentions to the audience. The study analyzes the importance of researching and examining theatrical decorative art, as well as the extensive use of developments in visual art genres and modern achievements in the staging process. It emphasizes the relevance of creating a distinctive artistic atmosphere on stage through new, conceptual visual and expressive means that enhance audience perception.

**Keywords:** theater, verbal art, dance, music, acting, fine arts, architecture, scenography.

The role and significance of theatrical art in enriching the spiritual world of individuals are immense. For this reason, special attention has long been given to the development of this art form in the life of the state and society.

Theater is a synthetic art form in which dramaturgy, music, visual arts, dance, and architecture form an inseparable unity. The simultaneous and harmonious integration of these artistic achievements within a single space defines the impact of a performance. This truth has been recognized since the earliest periods of theatrical history: without these components, an artistic performance cannot exist. More precisely, in theatrical art, independent art forms—verbal art, dance, music, acting, fine arts, and architecture—participate in artistically representing the idea of a dramatic work on stage through the director's interpretation. Although each component exists as an independent art form, within theater they merge into a unified whole, forming a specific component of the performance. Throughout the development of a performance, each component evolves and follows its own artistic trajectory. If this system is not observed, the artistic and aesthetic value of the performance diminishes, and the theme and idea of the work are not fully revealed. Therefore, since the most ancient times of theater history, special attention has been paid to the harmony of all components.

Depending on the type and genre of the performance, these components fulfill different functions. For example, in dramatic performances, music serves as an auxiliary means that enhances emotional impact, whereas in operetta and musical drama it has equal status with spoken text. In opera and ballet, music plays a decisive role.

The contribution of theater artists (scenographers) to the creation of stage works is significant. Based on the content, idea of the work, and the director's intentions, the artist creates unique set designs that correspond to stage imagery.

As in any art form, theatrical art undergoes changes over time due to scientific and technological progress, leading to the formation, development, and eventual disappearance of certain artistic and aesthetic principles. Some principles re-emerge after centuries, either independently or under the influence of other art forms, revealing new content and meaning.

Although scenographic art has a history spanning thousands of years, it remains one of the least studied components of theater. In this sense, scenography within Uzbek national ballet art has also not been sufficiently researched.

Today, theatrical set design and scenography are regarded as essential components in revealing the theme and idea of a work and in fully communicating the director's objectives to

the audience. Therefore, the study and analysis of theatrical decorative art, along with the extensive use of the development of visual art genres and modern achievements in staging processes, have become a pressing issue. Creating a new artistic atmosphere on stage through conceptual visual and expressive means is especially relevant. Research into this issue enables the harmonization of choreography and decoration in Uzbek ballet art, ensures artistic integrity, and helps eliminate gaps between history, contemporary processes, theory, and practice. As a result, it becomes possible to further develop stage culture and enhance the audience's ability to perceive and comprehend artistic works.

The findings and conclusions of this research may also contribute to the creative collaboration among directors, choreographers, composers, and artists, thereby improving the artistic quality of theatrical productions. For young art scholars and researchers who aim to study theatrical works—particularly ballet productions—and decorative solutions of different periods, these materials may serve as a valuable additional source for dissertation research.

When spectators come to the theater, they share joy, sorrow, and contemplation with the characters for two or three hours, often forgetting that they are witnessing someone else's fate. This is undoubtedly an achievement of the actors, director, and playwright. However, there is another crucial contributor whose work unites the entire team and without whom the location and time of events would become vague—this is the theater artist. Beyond general concepts, the artist must possess the ability to create a stage environment through decorative pictorial means and understand the properties of decorative materials.

During preparation for a performance, an artist is selected whose personal creative style aligns closely with the content of the play. Before beginning work, the artist studies the content and form of the work, the playwright's worldview, creative method, and distinctive features.

To depict the historical period and environment, the artist thoroughly studies relevant historical, literary, and ethnographic materials and, in collaboration with the director, represents them allegorically and conditionally.

As an example, one may consider the performance *"Alisher Navoi"* (by Izzat Sultan) staged at the Uzbek National Academic Theater. Artist B. Turaev began his work by carefully studying sources, sketching designs, creating models, examining historical costumes, and introducing original innovations. The performance consists of four scenes: the palace, the battlefield, the garden, and the library. Turaev depicted period elements on stage, including thrones, chairs, furnishings, jewelry, weapons, and bookshelves. In the palace scene, the artist relied on architectural principles to create a mobile and monumental set. At the center stands the throne of Husayn Bayqara, illuminated by chandeliers, with palace doors on both sides through which actors enter and exit. Additionally, minaret-like structures decorated with geometric and ornamental patterns symbolize the constrained life within the palace. A tall, ornamented, three-sided structure rotates in accordance with the events of the performance, revealing the four scenes. In the battle scene, red lighting, various sound effects, and miniature elements convey the tragic devastation of war. In the garden scene, the passionate love between Alisher Navoi and Guli is expressed through a picturesque landscape covered with a soft white fabric. Costume design reflects historical accuracy, overall stage harmony, and character traits, with each decorative element carrying symbolic meaning. In the library scene, shelves filled with books are displayed. In short, B. Turaev created a composition fully aligned with the work. Theater artists do not replicate one another; each possesses a unique vision and solution. Even the same performance can be interpreted differently by different artists.

The creation of ballet performances requires a distinct approach from set designers, as music and the libretto are the leading factors in ballet. However, a fundamental principle underlies all staging processes. Ballet requires freedom of space on stage, avoiding massive and

heavy decorative elements in favor of lightness and simplicity that allow dancers' movements to be clearly visible. The artist's primary task is to create a creative space harmonious with the theme and idea of the work.

Special attention must also be given to ballet costumes, which should be simple and should not restrict dancers' movements. Often, a dancer performs alone against the backdrop of a decorative solution that represents the overall development of events. In such cases, color harmony in costumes becomes a key expressive element of the artist's palette. This demands high professionalism, advanced ideas, and refined aesthetic sensibility from the artist.

In ballet, the artist's role is to express the idea of the work through visual artistic solutions while creating an environment that interprets choreographic imagery without diminishing the performance's impact. Artistic integrity is achieved through visual solutions that preserve harmony between music and choreography. Historical analysis of ballet performances reveals that scenographic approaches in ballet differ significantly from those in drama and opera theaters. Ballet sets prioritize spaciousness and freedom of movement, using lightweight decorative elements suited to dance.

Thus, ballet is an art form within theater that requires a special approach. Ballet performances effectively utilize scenography and decorative art that align with their specific requirements.

The difference in set design between drama and ballet performances lies in the fact that ballet conveys narrative development primarily through choreography. Ballet dancers require wide space to demonstrate plasticity and expressive movement based on choreographic principles. In drama theater, by contrast, actors may convey character through limited movement.

Modern ballet stage design avoids excessive and unnecessary decorative grandeur. Instead, the focus is on depicting the environment in which events unfold, avoiding distractions for the audience.

Opera and ballet performances commonly use pictorial decorations such as landscapes, interiors, conditional ornaments, and abstract scenes. This approach ensures that the stage remains unobstructed for dance and mass scenes. Historical authenticity in decorations enhances the audience's aesthetic experience and sense of the past.

The collaboration between the director and the artist is inseparable. When the artist accurately understands and interprets the director's vision, the performance becomes richer in content. Every stage detail must serve to reveal the idea of the work, making the director-artist relationship critically important.

Artists can achieve visual solutions in two ways: first, through flat decorative backdrops that create a unified planar composition; second, by widely utilizing the stage's spatial possibilities, arranging decorative elements across the stage platform.

One of the main elements of stage design is lighting. Previously used merely for illumination, lighting now holds significant artistic importance, playing a decisive role in depicting time, space, and actors' psychological states. Inappropriate details, underuse of technical capabilities, and weak creative collaboration often reduce performance quality. Therefore, abandoning traditional patterns and analytically studying and applying modern global scenographic trends is an essential requirement of contemporary theater.

Lighting designers play a crucial role in stage decoration, as lighting serves as the culmination of the artist's creative work. Through lighting, painted canvases can resemble fine fabrics, wooden boards can appear metallic, foil can look like gold or silver, and ordinary glass can resemble crystal. Lighting specialists resolve spatial and atmospheric challenges, using color interplay to depict winter cold, midnight darkness, or spring brilliance.

Studying the historical stages of decorative and scenographic art reveals humanity's enduring pursuit of beauty and the divine. Over time, evolving ideas and artistic movements have contributed to the growth and refinement of art, culminating in its present forms. Ballet art, in particular, has quickly secured its place among other art forms. The role of the stage artist in theater is of special importance: the artist must assist the actor by creating the environment in which events unfold. The overall meaning and philosophy of a performance depend on comprehensive artistic solutions, where scenery and props support every movement of the actors. The stage artist must analyze works like a director and embody roles like an actor to create fully realized stage designs.

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