

United Scenic Artists • Local USA 829, IATSE

• REPRESENTING •

Art Department
Coordinators

Art Directors

Computer Artists

Costume Designers

Lighting Designers

Production Designers

Projection Designers

Scenic Artists

Scenic Designers

Sound Designers

• FOR •

Major & Independent
Motion Pictures

Network & Cable TV

Broadway &
Regional Theatre

Opera

Ballet

Commercials

Industrial Shows

Special Events

• AND MORE •

COSTUME DESIGN EXAM INFORMATION — EASTERN REGION

Dear Applicant,

This letter should guide you through the application process and help you understand what the judges will look for at your interview. We hope it will clear up any questions not answered in the General Entrance Information letter you should also have downloaded from our website—www.usa829.org—and read.

Application for Membership consists of 3 Parts:

1. The Application Materials, **due as noted on Date Schedule** —
 - A) Please include:
 - i. The Application Form
 - ii. The \$200 combined Filing & Exam Fee on a Personal Check *only* payable to: United Scenic Artists Local USA 829
 - iii. Five (5) self-addressed mailing labels
 - iv. Seven (7) copies of the Production Questionnaire
 - v. Seven (7) copies of your Résumé

Please Note: Based on these materials, the Committee may recommend further professional development before advising the applicant to continue the Exam process.

2. Letters of Recommendation, **due as noted on Date Schedule** —
 - A) Minimum of three (3) letters, sent directly to the Union Office by the person writing the recommendation (see page 2 below).
3. The Interview/Portfolio Review, **held as noted on Date Schedule** —
 - A) A 20-minute interview with a panel of 5-7 professional Costume Designers who will review your portfolio.

Please Note: Not everyone is eligible for membership. The following criteria must be met:

PART 1 — THE APPLICATION MATERIALS

1. The Filing & Exam Fees —

- A) Please make sure your \$200 personal check for combined Filing & Exam Fees arrives at the Union Office *before* the date it is due. We cannot process applications if the fees have not been received. The committee also cannot be responsible for delays in the US mail.



29 West 38th Street
15th Floor
New York, NY 10018

tel: 212-581-0300
fax: 212-977-2011

www.usa829.org

2. Your Résumé —

- A) Provide seven (7) copies of your résumé.
- B) Please make your résumé information as complete as possible. Résumés must include the following:
 - i. Name of theatre or producer.
 - ii. Title of the event.
 - iii. Name of the director (see note below).
 - iv. Date/year the event was produced.

Please Note: Assistants do not need to name the director, but instead **must** name the Designer they assisted.

3. The Production Questionnaire —

- A) Provide seven (7) copies of the Production Questionnaire.
- B) The questions on this form pertain to the 2 major projects you wish to present at your Interview (see Interview/Portfolio Review section below).

PART 2 — RECOMMENDATIONS

Please choose three (3) individuals who will recommend your work. We suggest you try to get recommendations from **co-workers who are already members of United Scenic Artists**, as they are most closely aware of the abilities needed to function in the profession. **Producers, directors, and others in a hiring capacity** are the next ideal choice, as it is these people who must be aware of a designer's artistic ability as well as their practical knowledge and ability to function well under pressure.

Fill in the applicant information section at the tops of each form and give one to each of the individuals you have chosen.

To make it easier for your references to return these forms in time, we suggest you provide each reference with a stamped envelope pre-addressed to: **COSTUME DESIGN EXAM COMMITTEE, United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, 29 West 38th Street, 15th Floor, NYC, NY 10018**. *Make sure your references are aware of the deadline, found on the Date Schedule, so that we receive them in time for your interview.* Your evaluation will be based only on the references received at the office by that time.

Please Note: Applicants who work primarily as assistants are strongly advised to have the person(s) they assisted write their recommendation(s).

PART 3 — INTERVIEW/PORTFOLIO REVIEW

Check the Date Schedule to see when the interview will be. All interviews are held at a location to be announced. Once your application is processed, you will be assigned an interview time. **PLEASE BE PROMPT!** The interview will consist of a review of your portfolio and letters of recommendation by a

panel of professional designers. Your interview presentation must include, but is not limited to, *two (2) productions produced within the past two (2) years for which you were the principal designer or assistant*. How you choose to demonstrate your abilities is up to you, but remember that you are preparing a presentation for a group of working professionals. They will, in some cases, be far more scrupulous in evaluating your work than any director or producer. Please be aware that your demeanor is as important as your portfolio and work experience.

At the interview, you will be given twenty (20) minutes to present and discuss your portfolio. The time allowed will be strictly monitored; therefore choose your work carefully to display a wide enough range of your skills and experience.

For the two productions you choose to focus on you must have:

1. **Costume Plates** — They may consist of full-color plates, black & white sketches with color indications by swatch or photo, photo collage or a combination of all three. Please make sure to provide swatches for anything you had built.
2. **Production Photographs** — Please include **at least five (5) carefully selected photographs**. They should be specific, close, in-focus shots. Avoid repetition of the same subjects. We highly recommend the use of photographs as we feel that these are the quickest and clearest method of presenting realized work that can be compare to the sketches. We also accept color photocopies and Cibachromes made from slides.

A note about video tapes: As previously stated, we feel that a good photo is most effective. While a video tape is impressive, the overall effect is negated when the judges have to sit and wait while you search for the perfect moment to view ten seconds of your costume. ***There is no on-screen speed search with the Union's VCR.*** If you choose to show a reel, make sure that it is edited to 10-12 minutes of highlights. We emphasize again that you are being evaluated on the professionalism of your presentation: clear, concise and direct methods are the most effective.

3. **Research Material** — Photocopies will do nicely. Please arrange your research into some form of presentation, making sure you indicate the character name with his or her research.
4. **Production Paperwork** — Assistants especially should show *bibles, organizational paperwork, budgets whenever possible, Polaroids and/or shopping lists*. Convince the judges that you are well-organized, well-informed and flexible, and that you are therefore a valuable right hand to the Costume Designer.
5. You are welcome to show rough sketches if they are part of your process.

Over the years we have found that a flat, table-top presentation of your material is the most effective. The panel consists of six (6) designers. Logistically it is very difficult for them to view material presented in book form. It is also easier for the designers to return to work that is presented flat on the table. Organize your presentation carefully. Time will be allotted for you to set up your materials in the order you wish. Although no limit is placed on the number of projects you may present, again we stress that you

have only twenty (20) minutes of actual interview time. If you are in doubt, **bring more rather than less**. On the day of your interview, a Committee member will be available to help you set up, guide you through the process and help you make selections of your work if necessary.

In addition to the expected portfolio items, please feel free to include other artwork which might give the panel a fuller understanding of your capabilities: graphic design, packaging, fine arts, book illustrations, etc., can add to the overall impression you leave with the panel. The panel of designers reviewing your work has been selected from diverse areas of the profession including theatre, film, television and industrials. We are trying to offer you as many different opinions as possible, and to diminish the weight of any one person's opinion. During the presentation and interview the panel may feel they need to ask you questions and/or offer advice. *Please do not be intimidated by this*. After your presentation you will be asked to leave the room while the panel takes some time in private to make their evaluation. After they have finished, you will be given time to collect your work. **No work is to be left at the Examination Site.**

The interview is not a contest or lottery. There is no quota or sliding scale. You will be reviewed on the basis of your work alone, not in comparison with anyone else. We welcome any and all who are qualified and who meet the Union's costume design standards. This is a very large step for every designer and is not to be taken lightly. How strongly you impress the panel as to the level of your talent and abilities is determined by the quality of your portfolio, recommendations, résumé and interview. Only you can decide if you are a technically viable candidate for this Exam.

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

The decision of the panel is final. Once the review has been completed, you will be notified of the results by mail, usually within 4-7 days following the interview. A summarized explanation of the panel's comments will accompany letters to candidates whose work is not up to the standards of this Union. The panel's recommendations for membership are subject to final ratification by the General Membership on the floor of the first USA meeting following completion of the Exam. If you have not received notification of Exam results within one month of your interview, please contact one of the Committee members below. Your \$1,500.00 initiation plus approximately \$280.00 in additional IATSE fees must be paid *within three (3) months of being notified* of the recommendation for membership. After three months your membership recommendation will be forfeited. **Please do not apply if you cannot afford to pay the full initiation and IATSE fees within three months of being recommended for membership.**

Should you have any questions, *do not call the office!* You may contact:

Kitty Leech at 718-789-9819 (day or evening) or via email to: kl2@nyu.edu

David Brooks at 212-594-4185 (day or evening)

Dean Brown at 212-496-9297 (day or evening)

David Burke at 212-217-1983 (day or evening)