

# 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 •

## SCENIC ARTIST ENTRANCE INFORMATION – EASTERN REGION

Dear Applicant,

There are at present 3 applicant-initiated methods of gaining membership in the Scenic Artists category of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, IATSE: via the **TRACK A Exam**, the **TRACK B "Open" Exam**, or the **Scenic Artist Apprenticeship Program**. You may choose which of the methods you feel qualified for, but note that all applications will be reviewed by the Committee to verify eligibility as noted below.

IATSE members wishing to transfer from another Local into Local USA 829 must contact the Business Office at **212-581-0300**.

### TRACK A EXAM

The TRACK A Exam is for Scenic Artists with at least three (3) years of **professional, not academic, experience in the entertainment industry**. The Exam is a twenty-minute (20-minute) interview, during which time the Judges will review the applicant's portfolio and some required samples. This Exam is given twice each year, in the Spring and the Fall. Please check the online Date Schedule at [www.usa829.org](http://www.usa829.org) to verify the dates and deadlines for this Exam.

To qualify for the TRACK A Exam Interview, you (the applicant) must submit a completed Application and Scenic Artist Qualifying Questionnaire; three (3) signed Letters of Recommendation, on letterhead, from either a producer, shop owner, technical director, designer, art director or charge Scenic Artist for whom you have worked; and one (1) Résumé. *Your interview **cannot** be scheduled unless all of these documents are in the hands of the Committee for processing by the date indicated on the Date Schedule.*

After processing your Application and paperwork, and if the Committee feels you are qualified, you will be asked to present the following materials at an Interview:

1. You must bring **five (5) copies** of your current Résumé.
2. You must bring visual documentation of **at least three (3)** recent projects for which you were the **Principal Scenic Artist**. These production projects **must** be for theatre, ballet, opera, film, television or videos. You may include *one (1)* project that was for a mural, display/exhibit, interior, faux finish, still photography or signage. You must not choose any projects for which you were the designer or art director.
3. You must present **four (4) samples**, done in a non-solvent-based medium, none smaller than 18" x 24". These samples should include a selection of foliage, drapery, reflective metal ornament with aging, marble, wood-grain, a portrait, architectural ornament or a 3-dimensional piece no smaller than 1-foot.
4. You must include a representational drawing, at least 18" x 24".
5. You must present a general portfolio with work other than the requested samples.

It will not be possible for you to be recommended for membership as a Scenic Artist if you don't bring all of the above items to your scheduled Interview. **No exceptions!**

All applicants who pass the TRACK A Exam will be recommended to the membership on the floor of the next General Membership Meeting held. Ultimately, the floor makes the final decision to accept these applicants as new members or not, based on the Committee's recommendations. Applicants who cannot be recommended for membership after the Interview may consider the TRACK B "Open" Exam or the Scenic Artist Apprenticeship Program.



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15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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[www.usa829.org](http://www.usa829.org)

### TRACK A EXAM FEES & INITIATION FEES

After receipt of your \$75.00 Filing Fee and TRACK A application materials, the Committee will review your materials to determine whether you are qualified for the TRACK A Exam. If so, you will be so notified, your Interview will be scheduled and your Exam Fee of \$125.00 will be due in the Union office by the date listed on the enclosed Date Schedule. Please send all fees promptly to assure the Committee that you are following through with your Exam. All fees must be paid by **Personal Check** only. Make sure **your name** is on all fee checks, and “SCENIC ARTIST EXAM” is written on the check’s “Memo” line. Make all checks payable to: **United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829**.

If your application does not fulfill the requirements for TRACK A, you will be notified of this and advised to apply to the Scenic Artist TRACK B “Open” Exam or the Scenic Artist Apprenticeship Program.

The full Initiation Fee for *all* USA 829 Members is \$3,500.00. Currently, there is a rebate of \$2,000.00 for anyone admitted through the Exam/Interview processes, making the actual Initiation Fee \$1,500.00 for those who pass an Exam (this includes Apprentices). There are additional IATSE dues and fees which total approximately \$280.00, bringing the total Initiation Fee to \$1,780.00. These fees are to be paid before initiation, and must be paid *within three (3) months of being notified* of the recommendation for membership. After three months the applicant’s 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 pass Exam/Interviews in more than one category (at any time), your *maximum total Initiation Fee is \$1,500.00*.

### TRACK B “OPEN” EXAM

The “Open” Exam, or TRACK B, is open to anyone 18 years of age or older with on-the-job or academic experience in art, theatre, film, television and related industries. The Exam is designed for those who do not have the professional experience to apply for TRACK A, but who may be overqualified for the Apprentice Program. The Exam begins with a General Aptitude Test which is a written, mostly multiple choice test of basic studio knowledge. Those who pass will be assigned a Home Project which consists of several painting exercises. While the applicant does bring the Home Project to his/her interview, it is judged independently. The 20-minute interview will cover the applicant’s experience, education, and a representative portfolio. The final stage of the Exam is a Practical Studio Skills Test at which the applicant will be given a specific assignment to be completed in a limited amount of time in a studio setting.

After all parts of the Exam are administered, the scores from each part will be tallied, and those applicants with the highest collective scores will be recommended for membership.

### TRACK B “OPEN” EXAM FEES

The Filing Fee for the TRACK B “Open” Exam is identical to the TRACK A Exam (\$75.00). However those applicants who pass the Aptitude Test must pay a higher Exam Fee of \$225.00 in order to cover the increased costs of the Practical Studio Skills Test. If you pass, your Initiation Fees are the same as for TRACK A.

### SCENIC ARTIST APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The Apprenticeship Program is a three-year program that is sponsored by the Local and is registered by the New York State Department of Labor. Apprentice Exams will be offered periodically as dictated by the availability of work. All applications will be received without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation. Interested parties must have the following minimum qualifications **before** making application to the program.

1. Applicant must show proof of being at least 18 years of age and have a valid Social Security number upon acceptance into the program.
2. Applicant must have earned a High School diploma or G.E.D. upon acceptance into the program.
3. Applicant must have reliable transportation or means of transportation to job sites and related training locations.

4. Upon acceptance into the program applicant must supply a physician's statement confirming the applicant's agility and physical ability to:
  - a. Lift 5 gallons of paint, joint compound and/or other materials on the job.
  - b. Work on ladders and scaffolding.
  - c. Work outdoors on locations under various weather and temperature conditions.
5. Applicant must be able to pass an aptitude test in English (read & write in English).

The Apprenticeship Program is looking for applicants with a working knowledge of art, theatre, film and related industries, but with less than three (3) years of experience. The Apprenticeship Committee reserves the right to reject applicants possessing too much experience as a working Scenic Artist, and would recommend either the Scenic Artist TRACK A Exam or the Scenic Artist TRACK B "Open" Exam (see pages 1 and 2 above).

### APPRENTICESHIP EXAM

United Scenic Artists administers a three-part test for all applicants of the Apprenticeship Program. Applicants should be aware that there are minimum passing scores for each part of the testing process. Unless these scores are met, the applicant may not be able to move on to the next phase of testing.

All applicants will be notified by mail as to the date, time and location of **Part 1 of the Exam: the General Aptitude Test**. The General Aptitude Test is comprised of questions that range in subjects such as basic art, scenic art, art history, math and drafting. It is made up of mainly multiple-choice questions. You will be notified by mail as to whether you passed or failed this part of the Exam.

If you pass Part 1 of the Exam, the Apprenticeship Committee will next notify you by mail as to the date, time and location of **Part 2: the Portfolio Review and Interview**. The applicant is expected to bring *at most six (6) pieces of original artwork*. They may vary from paintings, drawings and/or sculptures, however *no slides will be accepted*. Xerox copies or photographs of artwork will be accepted. We do not require any artwork that is directly theatrical, but would like the artwork to be representational. For example: a copy of a Vermeer or Fragonard would be acceptable; a copy of a Pollack would not be acceptable. The size of each piece should be no larger than three-feet by four-feet (3' x 4'). Members of USA 829 who are not part of the Apprenticeship Committee judge this portion of the Exam. You will be notified by mail as to whether or not you passed Part 2 of the Exam.

If you pass Part 2 of the Exam, the Apprenticeship Committee will next notify you by mail as to the date, time and location of **Part 3: the Practical Skills Test**. Applicants will be given specific assignments to complete in a limited amount of time.

After all tests are administered, the scores from each part will be tallied and the applicants with the highest collective scores will become the apprentices for that year. The number of apprentices taken into the program will vary depending on the current work situation (high or low employment of current Scenic Artist members) and number or proposed projects.

Once accepted into the Scenic Artist Apprenticeship Program, applicants will be initiated into Local USA 829 and have the rights as full members to attend meetings and to vote in elections and on all referenda.

### **APPRENTICESHIP JOB DESCRIPTION**

Once accepted into the program, the apprentices will be assigned to a variety of different jobs over the three-year program. As a Scenic Artist Apprentice, you will be working in many venues such as movies, network TV, cable and episodic TV, scenery supplier shops, the Metropolitan Opera, and perhaps commercials that require a large crew. There must be five (5) journeymen Scenic Artists employed on any single job before one (1) apprentice could be considered for hire on the same job. This 5:1 ratio is always the basis as to whether jobs are available for the apprentices. All Scenic Artists work when there are available jobs, and there are no guarantees in our industry of providing steady work for anyone.

### **AN EXPLANATION OF APPRENTICE RATES**

Apprentices will start the program at fifty-five-percent (55%) of the Journeyman Scenic Artist's rate of pay, which varies depending on the contract you are working under. There are various contracts for the venues of the industry: major film, scenery supplier, network TV, episodic TV, cable TV, commercials, independent film and the Metropolitan Opera. The rate of pay for apprentices will increase every four (4) months by five-percent (5%). By the end of the three-year program, apprentices will be earning full Journeyman wages.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE APPRENTICE**

The basic demands of the apprentices will be to complete approximately four thousand (4,000) hours of training in a variety of specific skills. Included in these hours are seminars that the apprentices are required to attend. Homework assignments will be given for certain classes and a personal sketchbook focusing on figure drawing and architectural studies is to be kept by the apprentice. Class work and homework projects and the sketchbook are reviewed and critiqued by the instructors and committee members.

The apprentices are also required to keep a logbook of tracking sheets to record the number of hours of on-the-job training and the skills they performed, as well as a one-page weekly activity sheet. This sheet is for you to write down the work processes you did daily on a job. At the end of a workweek, you will submit this sheet to the Charge Scenic Artist who will sign it. You will then return this activity sheet and the monthly tracking sheets to the Scenic Artist Apprenticeship Administrator. These tracking and activity sheets provide us with documentation of your work experiences and training skills as required by the New York State Department of Labor.

The apprentices must attend all Health and Safety classes given by the USA 829 Health and Safety Officer, Monona Rossol.

### **APPRENTICESHIP PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

There is a ninety-day (90-day) probationary period for all apprentices. The Apprenticeship Committee, Administrator and instructors will decide during the probationary period whether or not the candidate is fulfilling his/her obligations as an apprentice. If the candidate has missed three (3) seminar classes during this period, or if he/she has gotten numerous unfavorable reports from Charge Scenic Artists or seminar instructors, this would be cause for being dropped from the program. Should the Committee decide that a candidate is dropped from the program, the apprentice would be refunded the first installment of their initiation fee.

During the probationary period, if the apprentice decides to leave the program, the apprentice will be refunded the first installment of their initiation fee. Should the apprentice decide to leave the program after the ninety-day probationary period, and they have paid the full initiation fee, the first installment initiation fee will not be refunded, but the remaining initiation fees will. If the apprentice decides to leave or is dropped from the program at any time, all affiliation with United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, will become null and void.

**INITIATION FEES — APPRENTICESHIP**

The Initiation Fee for all USA 829 apprentice members is \$1,500.00 and there are additional IATSE dues and fees, which total approximately \$280.00, bringing the total Initiation Fee to \$1,780.00. The Financial Secretary of Local USA 829 can determine a payment schedule for apprentice members who may need to pay their Initiation Fees on an installment plan.

**ALL FURTHER QUESTIONS**

Should you have any further questions, **do not call the Union office!** The Office staff **cannot** answer Exam questions or take messages for Committee members. Instead you may contact:

Peter Hackman via e-mail to: [HackmanNY@aol.com](mailto:HackmanNY@aol.com)  
Regarding the Scenic Artist TRACK A and Scenic Artist TRACK B “Open” Exams *only*  
(no Apprenticeship Program questions.)

Cathy Santucci-Keator via phone at: 212-581-0300 (9 am to 5 pm weekdays)  
Regarding the Apprenticeship Program *only*  
(no TRACK A or TRACK B Exam questions.)

We wish you good luck.

**THE SCENIC ARTIST EXAM COMMITTEE**