



THE DECORATION OF THE THEATER COSTUME

HAND PRINTING ON FABRIC



To create theatrical costumes is it necessary a preliminary philological study in accord to creating a realistic dress able to support the illusion on the stage. It's necessary to follow style of ancient manner, select fabrics that are suitable to make the correct volume and to pay attention to details as decorative ornaments and finish. Regarding this last aspect, the dress decoration can be developed by the costume designer and tailor thank to manual techniques that create strong and effective visual impact Hand printing on cloth is one of these.



TEXTILE PRINTING

Textile printing is a method of printing on fabric that changes according to processes, supports, effect and fabric. We start following the costume sketch.

The dress can be fully ornated – the printed figure can cover the entire surface, repeating homogeneously the pattern - or can be partially decorated - on certain specific areas. The quality of a printed fabric is recognized by the absence of smear, the designs' profile accuracy, the number of colors, the type of background textile.

For hand techniques, the drawing is carved on wood block, mold or stencil templates.



STENCIL PRINTING

The stencil technique consists in obtaining a negative mask of the sketch to create the rigid original press. The same image is duplicated on a surface through the application of paint or other coloring material on the missing parts of the support.

The pattern/figure/image is cut with a sharp-pointed knife; the uncut portions representing the part that will be left uncoloured. The sheet is laid on the fabric and colour is brushed through its interstices.

WORKING PHASES. STEP BY STEP

- Duplicate the pattern on an acetate sheet and cut the edges with a cutter
- Wash the fabric to remove the stiffener and iron to obtain a perfectly stretched surface.
- Place the pad in the right area of the dress, brush with the color the press/mask/pad surface (mind to keep it in vertical orientation to let the color glow in the interstices;
- Iron on reverse side of the textile several time, while pressing the drawing to fix the ink





THE FABRIC

The stencil press is an excellent technique on the theatrical costume to suggest effects of original vintage prints or embroideries. Gauze, linen and canvas are the best, commonly used, for the technical adequacy and for the economic convenience. The woven structure of the gauze is a light and transparent, it has sparse weft. The huck lace requires some warp threads more taut, flanked by other more twisted and loose, which interlace, following a sinuous course. The result is a very open textile structure, "pierced", but at the same time durable. It become thicker and stiff if dye or printed with many colors layers. The elegant lightness of Gauze makes it pleasant and can be used for spectacular scene elements: draperies, tablecloths and linings. In costume: stoles, scarves, skirts and women's blouses. The "false gauze" is a variant, with a linear but sparse weave structure, used mainly to depict bandages and rags.



The guinea linen is, instead, a raw cotton fabric, cream or white naturally colored, affordable and good at absorbing colors of manually printed, for test- dress (o do not waste the most expensive fabric. This is the reason while, in the vast range of linen the tailor choose the most similar to the high quality selected fabric, in term of weight and texture, folds and draping capacity. It exists in many types, 100% linen, with fine and sparse weft, or in the medium-heavy type. This type of cloth is very suitable to be printed because, when treated with the right colors and with appropriate designs, it simulates exhaustively precious vintage fabrics such as velvets or wools.





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Le fotografie sono di Filippo Manzini