History of “The Wiz” Musical\(^1\) - Marquis

- **Year of Broadway Production** - 1975
- **Year of movie adaptation** - 1978
- **What made these productions important?**
  - It was important to Black culture and for Afrofuturism.
  - It was a very influential and fun musical for literally all ages.
  - The whole idea was very innovative.

The Wiz was “a seminal musical that featured an R&B/soul score and an all-black cast.” \(^2\)

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Afrofuturism[^3] - Tristan

The things that we do in the play are amazing. The teachers help us out a lot. When I was online I had to do my lines on Zoom, so they changed the script a little bit. Then they wanted to do Afrofuturism and that inspired us to work harder. We also make our own stage, and we really get into our roles. It's really cool and fun.

We have also been appreciating black culture, and it's nice to learn about the truth. The term Afrofuturism was first coined by Mark Dery in 1993 essay “Black to the Future,” but the idea was around long before. This was an era where African-Americans looked very much like second class citizens.

“Afrofuturism was a tool that they could use to imagine a better future, and the movement continued into the contemporary era.”[^4]

[^3]: [https://africanarguments.org/2018/03/this-is-afrofuturism/](https://africanarguments.org/2018/03/this-is-afrofuturism/)
Photos of Afrofuturism

[5]

https://www.google.com/search?q=frida+kahlo&safe=active&client=safari&rls=en&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fr-QSBpbbrzjPhDMM%252CPOIxFV4psyl_AM%252C&vet=1&usg=AJrKuxMtb_dVfj6HhXqDIKfKvNLw%26sa=X%26ved=2ahUKEwjXt_ex4PwAhX_MlkF+HhXKOCJEQ_ht6BAg-EAE#imgrc=Q5qbpbrzjPhDMM
Kytana Winn met virtually with us earlier this semester. She taught us about her artistic process and answered questions about her work. She spoke a lot about the specifics of the process, including lighting and what tools she uses to create her collages. After learning the how, the ATLAS set design team began on the do. They incorporated what they learned from Kytana into the final set designs you see on stage now.¹

¹ https://www.cultureisfree.com/post/questions-kytana-winn
Physical and Digital Afrofuturist Collages by ATLAS Artists
Cultural appropriation versus cultural appreciation is an ongoing debate that has gone on for centuries. The ATLAS company has been studying this very important topic. We learned that cultural appropriation is taking parts of another person or another culture and using them inappropriately or without consent. Cultural appreciation on the other hand, is when you give credit to the culture and the people that you took your ideas from.

**Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation**

- Someone outside of a culture (usually belonging to dominant culture) uses or takes a piece of another culture
- Someone outside of a culture studies and understands a piece of another culture
Costume Team Design Statement:

- How did you center Black & African culture and fashion in your designs and design research process?

- To begin our research we looked closely at the script, and brainstormed ideas. We researched past productions and images of Afrofuturism. We collected art pieces from African American artists, and researched them. After, we made our own art piece and added futuristic and natural elements. We incorporated these into our costume designs. We then edited them and turned those designs into the actual costumes you see on stage!
Afropunk Explanation & Examples of Inspiration in our Designs - Ceci

When you think of punk, you think big. Lots of colors. And many times, against the societal norm. Afro-punk is a combination of Black expression and punk style. It’s also an official festival including fashion and art created and produced by Black artists. It’s an inclusive environment where Black people can express their artistry and wear big, creative, outfits. For us, once we had researched many futuristic pieces for our costumes, our Afropunk aesthetic was able to come together. We were able to incorporate those aspects into our design, and finish the Afropunk vision by adding our own unexpected materials like bubble wrap, zip ties, safety pins, flowers, and more. Our final product is big, fantastical costumes from an Afrofuturist lens that center our own identities.

7 https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HGP-4rM9ogXeBHP4fm5uINITgBIUjASP0m_lPf6reY/edit?usp=sharing
Glinda's Bubble Costume - Ruby

Glinda is one of the good witches in *The Wiz*. She is known as bright and bubbly with her supportive energy and personality! Glinda's costume's Afropunk element is making the costume big with bubble wrap. We wanted to make the dress similar to the one in the actual *Wiz* play, but add our own futuristic elements to it. By this we stuck to the same color pallet and design for the dress and sewed on blue and clear bubble wrap.
Abstract Art Inspiration - Mariana

We looked at the book of photos from the *Magnetic Fields: Expanding American Abstraction 1960s-Today* for inspiration. This was an exhibit that featured abstract art by artists who identify as Black and female.

*Racism is Like Rain, Either it’s Raining or it’s Gathering Somewhere* (1993) - Mary Lovelace O’Neal
*(Inspired Dorothy’s costume design)*

*(Inspired Evilene costume design)*

Mildred Thompson, *Magnetic Fields* (triptych) *(Inspired Munchkin costume & set designs)*
• **Natural Element inspiration** - *Benya*

  ○ When making costumes, we used natural elements or animals from certain African regions as inspiration. For example, the prints on the kalidah costumes are inspired by **okapis and leopards**. We used flowers as inspiration from the Atlas mountains in northern Africa for Addaperle's dress. The entire dress is a representation of a pink flower, the Moroccan Rose.
In our designs for munchkins and munchkin land, we used tie dye as a consistent style. We recently learned about Adire[^8], traditional blue and white dyed womens clothes in the Yoruba region of Nigeria, West Africa, similar to modern tie dye. The clothes are treated in many ways to create negative space in the absorption of the dye and create the desired design. These include Raffia, starch, hand painting, and more. Here are a few examples of Adire:

[^8]: https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/adire-tied-and-dyed-indigo-textiles
  - https://www.anansevillage.com/collections/african-tie_dye
We took into account the colors and patterns that we used. If we used African fabrics, we did research on where they were from. Some fabrics were bought from Owa African market in Brooklyn, NY, and some came from Nigeria. One costume that uses these fabrics is the Scarecrow’s costume. We made sure that we were respecting the history of the fabrics, and we tried to stick with a similar color palette that the original Wiz costumes used.
Futurism - Leala

One of the main themes of the design for the musical was futurism. One of the concepts our design team played with was the idea of the more evil or problematic a character the more technologically enhanced. Therefore, a character like Addaperle was very integrated into nature. In contrast Evillene was very technologically modified as exemplified by the LEDs in her shirt and mask.

Covid Safety in Costuming - Cooper

During a pandemic it is very important to stay safe. Due to this we had to incorporate face masks into our costume designs. We used similar fabrics and colors of the costumes to create the 25+ masks we made!
Significance of Axe Design - Auriyah

We decided to incorporate Afrofuturism and a regular axe. We researched and found a ceremonial axe from the Luba people found in the archeological dig site called Kamilamba. We decided to make it upside down to deviate from the original design.

https://africa.si.edu/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/striking-iron-the-art-of-african-blacksmiths/africas-iron-origins-archeological-evidence/
Oil Can Replica Description - Void

“This oil can güira prop is part of a costume used by Tiger Haynes as Tin Man in "The Wiz: The Super Soul Musical ‘Wizard of Oz’" on Broadway. It is a cylindrical tube of sheet metal with cone-shaped pieces soldered onto each long end. A rectangular hammered metal handle is nailed lengthwise to the join of the cylinder with nails. The bottom third of the cylinder has a series of hammered raised dots. When used as a percussive instrument, called a güira, these dots are scraped using a comb-like metal device to create sound."^{10}

Who designed it? Holder, Geoffrey, Trinidadian American, 1930 - 2014

^{10} [https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2007374](https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2007374)
Wiz Throne - Kamaria

We found an old chair, covered it in green fabric, used a nail gun to keep it in place. Then, we used toilet paper rolls covered with the same green fabric I used on the chair, and then glued it on. This is a royal throne from the Ashanti empire

11 a West African state that occupied what is now southern Ghana in the 18th and 19th centuries.

“Wanga” definition for Addaperle’s wand - *Void*

“A *wanga* is a magical charm packet found in the folk magic practices of Haiti, and as such it is connected to the West African religion of Vodun, which in turn derives from the Fon people of what is now Benin.”

**SET DESIGN**

- *How did the geography of the African continent influence our set design?* *Julius*

We studied the diverse geography of the African continent and used it as inspiration for our designs. Each location in our play is based off and inspired by a real ecoregion in Africa.
THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE INSPIRATION OF OUR OZ

Western Sahara Desert

Great Escarpment

Atlas Mountains

Lake Tana (Blue Nile)

Congo Basin (Rainforest)

Future / Alternate Universe
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECO REGION</th>
<th>GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landing (Munchkinland) FINN</td>
<td>Western Ethiopian Highlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOUNTAINS/HIGHLAND</td>
<td>We used bright colors to amaze the audience and juxtaposed against the bland backdrop of Kansas. It shocks you into this new world of existence. It is a color explosion. It has spiraling mountains and gorgeous plants that feed and mesmerize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey WILLIAM</td>
<td>The Sahel is a band of area that covers the west to east of North Africa. It is sandwiched between the Sahara above and the Savannas below. We took inspiration from the Sahel because it looks almost like a yellow road. It is semiarid meaning it gets some rainfall but is dryer than other ecoregions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald City MAX</td>
<td>TROPICAL RAINFOREST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Congo Rainforest</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Congo Rainforest was a huge inspiration for the Emerald City. The Emerald City's (quite obvious from the name) signature color is green. While brainstorming ideas for the set, we decided on the rainforest because of its deep, rich, emerald green vibe.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the map of ecoregions of the African continent, it is also the central location.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Congo Rainforest is home to hundreds of tree species which make it one of the most biodiverse places on the planet.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
We decided to choose the Sahara Desert for the witch's castle. This is the place where the wicked witch lives. She doesn't do well in water, so we decided to choose a dry environment. Plants there don't need water just like the witch (even though they need some from time to time she still likes the dry environment).
"Scale" really simply means a copy of an object that's either enlarged or made smaller while keeping its initial shape. The concept of scale was and still is an extremely important piece of our set design process. In preparation for building our set we needed to take a step back and look at the mathematical component in building 4 8" by 4" periaktoi.

Maria took advantage of this and made a unit on scale modeling so we could know how to build the flats before actually using power tools and wood. Each group was given a different scale factor to create their scale models. To do this, my group used posterboard cut into 8 inch by 4 inch pieces and made models of the periaktoi and our stage.
Periaktoi - Paul-Francis

- The idea is from ancient Greek theater.
- The stage is 22ft by 20ft, so we decided to build 4 periaktoi, whose total width is 16 ft across, with space in between the outside two.
- The periaktoi flats are 4ft by 8ft, and have wheels, so they can rotate.
- Each periaktoi has three sides, so we can create three settings per periaktoi. Each periaktoi is a triangular prism.
- When placed next to each other, they become one large background.
  - We built them by building 12 flats on the ground using wood and nails. Then we connected them with hinges. We then placed them on their bases, connected them, and put wheels on the bottom of the flats. Then we primed them, and finally added paint and patterns.
Significant color choices:
The poster's color choices were based on Dorothy's shoes. The colors that show on the boots when they are in the sun are these colors. The flowers coming out of the boots are flowers native throughout Africa.

Colors:
- light blue
- Darker shade of blue
- light seafoam green
- Purple blue
- Black
Flowers:
- Arctotis stoechadifolia\textsuperscript{12} is from South Africa
- Protea\textsuperscript{13} is from South Africa
- Clivia Lilies\textsuperscript{14} is from South Africa
- Barberton Daisy\textsuperscript{15} is from South Africa

\textsuperscript{12} \url{https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/arctotis-stoechadifolia/}
\textsuperscript{13} \url{https://www.mauifloral.com/blogs/news/blog-post-3}
\textsuperscript{14} \url{https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/clivia/outdoor-clivia-lily-care.htm}
\textsuperscript{15} \url{https://www.houseplantexpert.com/barberton-daisy.html}
Images
Our poster and all design choices surround the shoes. So, we included multiple images of them through our designs. The shoes are used because a lot of people who know *The Wizard of Oz* know about Dorothy's slippers. They symbolize power in *Oz* and the journey of self-discovery that Dorothy goes on.

Fonts
We looked for fonts that reminded us of a techno kind of vibe because it also gives off some futuristic qualities. We chose the fonts we chose because they give off a futuristic vibe and we are trying to do *The Wiz* with an Afrofuturistic aesthetic.

How did this design center Afrofuturism?
The entire design centers the shoes, which have a very futuristic design and look (thanks to the costume designers). The border Printha created, which we used for the poster, website, and program was based off of a circuit board.