

Lynne M. Koscielniak
Statement on Research/Creative Activity

I believe in the power that theatre has to educate and inspire. I believe that good design is an integral component to theatre production. I have a design process that honors the text and jump starts the imagination. I have lectured across the nation and in Poland on my “rapid-fire” process for stage design, inspiring young designers to trust their instincts and giving them the tools to get ideas out of their head and into physical space in the form of “bash models.” As a scenographer, I work professionally as a set and lighting designer and on occasion do projection design. I work across disciplinary edges in a variety of scales and venues, and in a way that promotes professional development and innovation.

At the heart of all my work, is the investigation of the role of technology in storytelling, as both my medium for artistic expression and a tool for collaboration. I focus on energy-efficient and wireless lighting systems. I have reported on my advancements in site-specific design as part of invited conference presentations for the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) and the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), among others. I have a new technology disclosure for a lighting device I call the “Droplet,” supported in part by a fellowship with the Technē Institute for Art and Technology. The “Droplet” aims to be a self-sustaining, water-resistant lighting fixture that can produce a limitless number of effects through the coding of a micro-processor. Process work was shared in a pop-up gallery exhibit, and research presentations took place at Baird Point (UB), at Buffalo’s City of Night Celebration, and at ATHE in Montreal. To test the prototype, I built a sculpture that emitted mist and experimented with how light and projected image interfaced with the surface. I refer to this work as Project MIST (Museum Integrating Stage Technologies). Working with a team of collaborators which included artists from Brock University (Ontario, Canada), we imagined what a living museum at Niagara would look like. Through a series of studio sessions, we arrived at a proposal for an evening of projected image, augmented reality, and light, where history is revealed through an art exhibition that questions Niagara’s fate.

Other collaborations include designs for full-length ballets, blockbuster musicals, world premiere theatrical productions, and contemporary plays. My original designs for *The Nutcracker* in collaboration with Neglia Ballet Artists and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, made possible in part by significant funding from the John R. Oishei Foundation, bring holiday magic to Shea’s Performing Arts Center each year. My local work has a national reach. Design innovations such as the three-dimensional growing Christmas tree and the eighteen foot wide “Mother Ginger as a decadent cupcake” have been the subject of conference presentations. In 2019, a new set design will mark the tenth anniversary. As a member of United Scenic Artists (a labor union and professional association of Designers, Artists and Craftspeople), I regularly work with Artpark & Company on productions of

Broadway musicals including *Mary Poppins*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Rodger's & Hammerstein's Cinderella*. My passion for new works has taken me off-Broadway to the Rodger Smith Gallery where I designed and installed an environment for the one-woman show *Corsetless*. It also took me down the hall to the UB Center for the Arts Mainstage where I worked with Randy Kramer of Musicalfare Theatre and Lehrer Dance on an original dance theatre piece set to the music of Paul Simon. Also, I enjoy designing scenery in intimate venues that demand creative staging solutions and provide opportunities to collaborate with teams that push my artistry. Such projects give me an outlet for keeping my computer aided drafting and model building skills sharp. My design work has been seen by thousands during hundreds of performances.

For my art and technology experiments, I have used Western New York as my lab. This has resulted in public performances in a grain silo, shipping container, mist lab, and most recently at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens. I apply traditional scenographic (stage design) practices to site specific work, and use ephemeral mediums (light, kinetic sculpture and atmospherics) to reveal hidden narratives of the landscape, with a focus on unusual parameters such as moisture and extreme temperatures. As a seasoned designer, I see new possibilities to solve old design problems with an eye towards sustainable practices. As an expert collaborator, I have strong feelings on how technology can aid a production process. I was invited to contribute on the subject of "Technology as a Tool for Collaboration," in a 2017 forthcoming Focal Press publication geared towards directors. This publication reaches a new audience who can appreciate how I value the spectator's experience, the growth of my collaborators, and the progressive thinking of the next generation of practitioners.