

DESIGNER. PAINTER. SCHOLAR.

Kay Macasey

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The most remarkable power I think we possess as humans is the ability to find art in every crevice of existence. We as a species are so intrinsically capable - and so instinctively determined - to give voices to the voiceless, to amplify the beauty of a fleeting moment, and to form a vision of the elements of what makes our human experience so unique and valuable. Theatre is one of the most holistic ways we explore our humanity through artistic expression, and I have seemingly always known I wanted to dedicate my life to it in some form. After choosing to pursue higher education, I majored in Theatre and Arts Administration at Drury University, intent on being a part of the theatre department even if it meant my only credit in the program was that I swept the stage prior to performances. I was given many more roles than that, however, and my skills began to open doors for me in the form of nonprofit arts organization work, professional freelance design opportunities, scenic charge artist gigs, and more.

I have continued my education at the University of Florida, pursuing an MFA in scenic design and becoming fascinated with the concept of composition as I gained skills as a designer. Designing sets for plays, musicals, dance, and various experimental works helped me to narrow my focus toward a specific interest in the way a scene paints a picture, in terms of scenic art as well as the visual narrative created by the performer, the blocking, and the mise en scène as a whole. This topic has led me to a path of performance studies-focused research that I hope to have the opportunity to refine by pursuing a Ph.D. I intend to further explore the possibilities of translating 2D form to 3D performance as a theoretical framework for communicating emotion on the modern stage and screen.

My research goals lie at the intersection of embodied art and intentional design. I plan to study spatial and compositional meaning-making both on canvas and in the three-dimensional and emotionally vibrant world of the stage by involving art, design, painting, performance, and the ever-meaningful role the spectator plays in the final experience. I also intend to research topics including semiology in design and practical applications of artistic compositional theories while exploring questions such as:

- How do we make meaning by moving through space?

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- Can the worlds of visual art and performance be merged with the express intention to give voice to the unspoken, or the instinctual?
- How does the scenic space and composition affect both performer and audience?
- Can a specific process be created to ensure a drawing or rendering communicates a predictable meaning?
- How can scenery incite catharsis and bring out emotion in those it surrounds?
- Why do humans gravitate toward compositions that simply “feel right”?
- Can theatre history serve as a framework for finding a throughline from canvas to stage?

With these ideas in mind, I am ambitious to form a strong research focus and work with a mentor to build a framework of specificity for a potential theoretical model. Thus far, I have been very fortunate and proud to work in the arts, bringing my passion and skill for painting, drawing, and design to bear in creating exciting worlds and emotional journeys for both actors and audiences. I’ve relentlessly followed this thread of where I know my life must lead, and it has formed me into a lifelong student with a passion for writing, teaching, and critically analyzing the art that makes humans such extraordinary beings. I sincerely hope to be offered the opportunity to continue along this path with an acceptance to UCI.