

SHAKE FEST STUDIO



Choosing the focus for your costume design

What to consider and questions to ask

Please note: The content here should be considered a guide only and is not designed to box you in – only to get you thinking. At the end of the day we want you to stay creative and go with your gut instincts!

Shakespeare wrote at least 37 plays, so how can you choose between them when picking the focus for your Shake Fest entry? Use this worksheet the help you find a choice you are passionate about!

What are your strengths?

No matter which category you are participating in, it's important to play to your strengths. So write them here! Great at drawing fine details? Like to look at the bigger picture? Better at designing in a particular style of clothing? Whatever it is, find a play that allows you to use what you've got as well as discover new talents.

What themes and issues resonate with you?

One awesome thing about Shakespeare is that he wrote about the human condition – that's one of the reasons why he is still celebrated today. Write a list of the things that resonate with you in your life today, so you can see if anything matches up to an existing storyline or theme in a Shakespeare Play, or the experience of one of the characters. When on your search, don't forget to strip back the fancy names and kingdoms so you can focus on the relationships and problems between the characters.

Examples: Unbridled ambition? Head to Macbeth. Friendship betrayal? Julius Caesar could be for you. Dealing with a love triangle? Check out loads of Shakespearean comedies like Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Nights Dream.

What are the moments of intrigue in the play that could be explored or highlighted through costume design?

How much information about the play, it's characters and it's context can you portray through your costume design? What are the most interesting plot points or observations for your audience? You have the flexibility to design many costumes for one character or to design for multiple characters in the play. You can also take an interpretation of the play and update it using costume. Designing more costumes doesn't always make the better body of work. What unique perspective could you share with your audience?

Have a think about different costumes you could create based on unique observations in the play and write them here - then choose between them!
