Hands on. All the time. From day one.

SFA’s pre-professional Bachelor of Fine Arts degree concentration in technical theatre and design provides intensive preparation for professional work in scenery, costuming, lighting, sound, makeup, props and more. Admission is competitive, by portfolio presentation (normally at the end of the sophomore year). Students emphasizing theatre design and technology are encouraged to identify primary and secondary areas of interest (costuming and lighting, for example). They get extensive coursework in these interests, plus classes in art, interior design or fashion. They are urged to participate in our extensive production programs as designers, assistant designers, crew leaders and technicians (and they are welcome to audition as actors, too, if they wish). Then they undertake a full-season internship at a major regional theatre or a year of study abroad. No SFA student ever competes with a graduate student in theatre for an opportunity to design, and new students (including freshmen) are asked to participate behind the scenes from their very first semester.

Work on over 20 shows a year:

12 to 16 student-directed studio-scale 10-minute plays each year
Six to eight student-designed, black-box one-act and full-length plays each year
Eight or nine faculty- or student-designed shows each year

Key courses available include:
- Production Laboratory I & II
- Costume Technology
- Stagecraft (scenic technology)
- Lighting Technology
- Stage Makeup
- Sound Technology
- Stage Management
- Portfolio
- Design (scenic, costume, or lighting; sound, advanced makeup, props, scene painting, historic costuming, advanced tech, CAD, or patterning)
- Play Analysis
- Advanced Play Analysis
- Repertory Theatre (summer only)
- Theatre Projects (design or tech)
- Practicum (year-long internship)
- Theatre Cooperative (study abroad)
Students who concentrate on theatre design and technology at SFA have a wide range of well-equipped facilities in which to learn and create. The 1,000-seat W.M. Turner Auditorium has a Broadway-sized stage house, a full fly system, trap space, a hydraulic apron/orchestra pit, a large control room atop the balcony and up-to-date lighting and sound systems. The Downstage Theatre, our “black box,” is a key laboratory for student designers. The Upstage Theatre, our studio space, was completely renovated in 2012. Our huge 5,000-square-foot scenic and props complex was renovated in 2009. We have an outstanding stock of period and modern costumes, and our extensive costume facilities include recently remodeled storage, laundry and dye rooms with all new equipment near our new, state-of-the-art sound laboratory. Our new student design studio features computer- and hand-drafting stations as well as a full lighting grid and control system.

Production opportunities of all kinds are practically boundless at SFA. Highly motivated student designers often get an opportunity to design in our faculty-directed Mainstage Series as a capstone project before embarking on their practicum. Extensive student crews and staffs make these major productions possible, and students are frequently assigned to positions of leadership. All of the many student-directed productions in the Downstage Theatre are also student-designed and executed. Play readings, original musical comedy shows and radio drama round out the School of Theatre’s public offerings. The University Series and Children’s Performing Arts Series offer part-time employment opportunities for students to work as crew members for professional music, dance and theatre events. Around campus, opportunities in visual art, film, music recording, television, dance and opera can add even more breadth to student experience in design and technology.

Students in this concentration are strongly connected to American professional theatre and the international scene. Guest designers have recently been drawn from Broadway, Hollywood and major regional theatre companies. Nearly all BFA students complete a practicum lasting a full academic year. This may be an internship with a major professional company such as Arizona Theatre Company (Tucson), Dallas Children’s Theater or Houston’s Tony Award-winning Alley Theatre. Past BFA students have spent a year at London’s leading international drama school, Rose Bruford College, in theatre design and costume production programs. Extraordinary scholarship support is available for this life-changing study-abroad experience.

SFA’S THEATRE FACULTY AND STAFF includes deeply experienced professional designers and technicians as well as award-winning teachers. Every SFA theatre graduate has an excellent broad education in all aspects of theatre and a strong liberal arts core. Our alumni include successful designers, technicians, managers and consultants on stages large and small. And our current students are the friendliest, hardest working, most talented and most mutually supportive bunch you’ll encounter anywhere. Find us at facebook.com/SFATheatre and they will tell you themselves what it’s like to go to school here.