

**“I want to be a machine”:
How Costume Design directs and challenges the Human in the Machine,
Hamlet (Ophelia) Machine**

by
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Abstract

This report analyzes the principles behind my thesis production of *Hamletmachine* (Heiner Mueller, 1977) at the University of British Columbia in April 2013, explains the concepts underlying the design and production, documents the stages of development towards production, and describes the challenges and the final results. *Hamletmachine* was work-shopped over a period of two school terms in 2012/13. The production intended as an exploration of a directorial/design/dramaturgical model in which costume design does not simply fulfill its traditional function of supporting theme, characterization and narrative but rather plays the leading role in determining and shaping these aspects of the theatrical event through the very materiality of, and physical restrictions inherent in, the costumes themselves.

My concepts are grounded in the theories and practical work of Bauhaus artist and theatre designer Oskar Schlemmer from the historical European avant-garde, as well as the East German playwright, author, dramaturge and poet Heiner Mueller.

At the core of this project was the idea of “Man as Machine”. In the anticipation of a post-apocalyptic age, humans are becoming increasingly machine-like, as evident by the development of the cyborg. For my design and production, this awareness resulted in the application of abstract and geometric design principles as well as LED technologies embedded in the costumes.

In addition, my design and production were based on the themes addressed in *Hamletmachine*, specifically Heiner Mueller’s concerns with the mechanisms of history and myth-making grounded in the “Age of Reason”. I was interested in Mueller’s redefinition of Ophelia as a revolutionary figure and how the costume can reflect this rethinking of the female role in society, politics and the arts.

The success of the workshops attests to the costumes affect on the performers’ bodies, together with the movements that were inherent in their shape and function. The conclusion also addresses the challenges of the production, as they materialized in the costumes as well as in the process of the production. In the end the costumes not only reflected the play and its structure, but also shaped the production and projected a new understanding of the theatrical script.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Ines Ortner.

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Dedication

To my mother Doris Ortner and her inspiring love for the performing arts and who has been always my greatest supporter.

To my grandfather Wilhelm Jungblut, his playful and kind humor, his love for magic and circus will always be part of my life.

...and to my husband Dirk.

Part 1: Introduction “The main point is to overthrow all existing conditions...”

“The utopian moment lays in the form,
also in the elegance of the form, the beauty in the form not in content”

Heiner Mueller, 1985

Through my extensive work for different theatrical stages I have developed an understanding of how the costumes affect the actor’s body as well as their communicative capabilities to convey meaning and create statements of being. I am interested in theatre that is focused around the costumed body and its movements. My aim for this thesis project was to explore the impact of materiality of costume on the performer, the ability of costume to influence the actor’s awareness of their body (and *Geist*) and how costumes can inform and guide character development and therefore create their own exclusive space. I suggest that the potential of the costumed body represents the main visual communicator of the script.

1.1 Heiner Mueller and *Hamletmachine*

The playwright Heiner Mueller (1929-1995) was a writer, poet, dramaturge and author from the German Democratic Republic, which had been governed by a centralized communist party from 1949 until 1990, when Germany became reunited. Mueller accounted for the significance of theatre in East Germany as a place to talk politics. From his perspective the theatre’s influence on the people “is placed in the absence of other possibilities to tell something to people.” Mueller’s approach to theatre is defined through the necessity of layering and masking of meaning in a politically oppressed environment: “If you are the object of History one needs other figures to talk about the problems” (Mueller, Edelman, Ziemer 89).

His play *Hamletmachine* cannot be described through a conventional play analysis. The most accessible component is the organization into a classical five act structure. Mueller does not refer to them as acts, but gives them numbers and assigns them titles, announcing thereby the mood and overarching concept of the particular part to come:

- 1 FAMILY SCRAPBOOK
- 2 THE EUROPE OF WOMEN
- 3 SCHERZO
- 4 PEST IN BUDA / BATTLE FOR GREENLAND
- 5 FIERCELY ENDURING MILLENNIUMS IN THE FEARFUL ARMOR

The parts do not relate directly to each other through a storyline, but each part creates its own microcosm, which is connected through its reoccurring main figures.

The other accessible components of the play are its figures. They are the essence of the characters found in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Reduced to specific, although fragmented character traits that function merely as metaphorical vehicles for the original characters in Shakespeare's play. From this core they are built up through a dense layering of text. This text is made up of seemingly unrelated statements, text fragments, citations and references to historical, philosophical and Mueller's own and other fictional sources, which creates a seemingly endless layering of meaning. Short speech fragments and stage directions push the figures through a jagged patchwork of fast changing actions in a very surreal and unyielding plot structure.

The text is written in both prose and poetry, the speakers are sometimes not identified or a text is assigned to multiple speakers. Mueller chooses sometimes to avoid a clear differentiation between action, stage direction and spoken word. Heiner Mueller scholar Norbert Otto Eke calls Mueller's *Hamletmaschine* a "memory discourse" from which just a "splinter of the dramatic constellations" from the original tragedy is still recognizable (75).

1.2 Why *Hamletmaschine*

The visual details of the script itself inspired me to look closer at *Hamletmaschine*. Because of its short textual length of just six pages it could be read as a short and fast pace play. Considering Mueller's aspiration of resisting dramatic structures, and from a designer's standpoint the play offers enormous space for the visual. From a visual standpoint there are massive spaces in-between the lines, where costume and movements can shape the play. This apparent potential of the script for adding visual layers between or around the value and interpretation of the sentences was my main reason for choosing *Hamletmaschine*.

The themes in the play are current, almost thirty-five years after its creation. They include the maintenance of "history's myth's making" and Mueller's interrogation of the limitations of reasoning as defined and upheld since the 18th Century. Arlene Teraoka states in her dissertation "The Silence of Entropy or Universal Discourse: The Postmodernist Poetics of Heiner Muller (Germany)" that Mueller is destructing in *Hamletmaschine* "the bourgeois model of drama as formulated by Lessing and Hegel" and his plays additionally "enact a criticism of Enlightenment ideology" (n.p.). Project Ophelia focused on examining these themes as addressed in the play through the unconventional means of costume design.

Mueller's main interest in the theatre is the process and the visual representation, particularly the set design and the possibilities of technologies like video projections. Stephan Suschke remarks on Mueller's preference for wide spread tableau-like spaces, "placing the narrative arrangements of the Brechtian theatre into a tension with the search for surreal imageries". Suschke notes that the seemingly unrelated figure constellation of the players is held in these spaces through the tension created by the imagery of the set (9-10).

Mueller's own production of *Hamletmachine* in Berlin accumulated historical references in the set design, drawn from the fine arts, history, war, business and the original *Hamlet*. This accumulation was also present in the costumes, although very faintly sketched, addressing superficial markers of fashion from the medieval era to the 20th Century. The mostly black or grey colored suits, coats and dresses were kept minimal and unembellished. The costumes were the most realistic visual part of the production (Suschke 185-189).

Since my aim for this thesis project was to explore the ways in which the costumed body represents the main visual communicator of the script, and the original production of *Hamletmachine* had not explored the potential of costumes, the play seemed a perfect vehicle for my ideas about process, the visual and its materiality.

1.3 Production Concept

In an interview Mueller explains that his texts can just be understood through time, not through "this penetrating explanatory method". Mueller states that his "text is a telephone book, and that's how it must be presented, then everybody understands it" (Suschke 35). The script's short, dense and fragmented style results in a forceful and highly unpredictable text that needed to be slowed down in the rehearsal process in order to allow the visual images enough space to be seen. The words itself had to be used as material, passing right through the meaning of the language and work with a focus on the formal aspects of sound, pitch, modulation, speed and dynamic. This approach would also support a display of a monotonous automatism, a method most likely to counter the natural desire for a release of tension. This tension is temporal as well as spatial and poses an interesting challenge for the costume design and other visual aspects on stage.

The *Hamletmachine* material deals with Europe's history, and how an endless chain of wars has shaped the continent and Germany. Through the metaphorical references to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mueller exposes the complicated socio-political and economic structures of the material, and the structures of academia and the theatre. At the core of all these systems are technologies that guide our understanding of progress, growth and norms, which is reflected in *Hamletmachine* as the tension between the human mind and the machine, the human body and the machine and the conflict within the human as a feeling and a functional mechanism. These abstract themes of conflict, complexity, contradiction, structuralism and accumulation of material needed to be identified in the script, specified and translated into a design concept.

The establishment of a mood that would support the notion of tension required careful consideration. This mood had to reflect a world that is beyond the point of no return, the pivotal point of industrial progression. I was particularly interested in finding a mood of an unknown, unfamiliar environment. The idea of using a strange soundscape for the play was from the beginning intended to be an integral part of the production. This electronic soundscape had to partially fulfill the role of the setting by upholding a tense and uncomfortable mood throughout the play. The avoidance of rhythms and the relentless never-ending presence of piercing sounds keeps the tension of the unfamiliar intact. This music had to be composed specifically for this production, because it created this productions environment.

Lastly, Mueller addresses the significant role of humor in his plays, which became a guideline for this production.

“If one does not understand *Hamletmachine* as a comedy one will fail with this play” (Mueller, Edelman, Ziemer 115)

The UBC Department of Theatre accepted my request to direct this process-oriented project as I wished to maintain a dominant focus on the costume design. Although direction and design are closely intertwined and inform each other on a conceptual and ongoing basis, the main focus in this report will be on the design aspect of the work.

Part 1 will introduce the play, the playwright Heiner Mueller and some of his ideas and concepts that are relevant to this project. It also addresses the reasoning for the choice for this play and the methods employed towards realizing the Production concept.

Part 2 examines the Costume Design Concept and the beginning of the actual designing process. It investigates how the design concept derives from the historical European Avant-garde and Oscar Schlemmer's work at the Theatre Department of the Bauhaus School in Germany.

Part 3 and 4 address the process of making the rehearsal costumes and the workshop costumes, the tests, experiments as well as the challenges arising during the rehearsals, three workshops and a fieldtrip.

Part 5 concludes with the findings of the workshop productions and the processes. The paper finishes with addressing the potential that is still embedded within this concept and the outcome of this workshop production.

Hamletmachine was conceived as a long-term workshop production lasting over the fall, winter and spring semester 2012/2013. The process included a one-day workshop on the 15th of December 2012, followed by a Two-day workshop on the 15th and 16th of March 2013 as well as a fieldtrip to the UBC Power Plant on the 5th of March. A fully produced workshop show was presented in the Dorothy Somerset Studio at the UBC Vancouver campus from the 24th – 28th of April 2013. The show's duration was approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes with a talk back session after every performance.

The production was co-produced by the UBC Theatre Department of Theatre and Film and Project Ophelia. During the 2013 fall term the members of the company included BFA students from the UBC Theatre Department and artists outside the University (Vancouver, B.C., Bowen Island, B.C. and Hamburg, Germany). The production team and artists included Amelie Schumacher, Production Manager, Alan Mak, Stage Manager, Elliott Squire, Props, Won-Kyoon Han Lighting and Sounds and Molly Lai, Set.

The actors joined the process in October 2012. Sarah Canero took on the role of Ophelia, Nick Preston played Hamlet and Nicole Yukiko Sekiya played Gertrud. The Chorus members were Morgan Churla and Natasha Zacher. Churla and Zacher also played the Dead Women and the Two Men in White Lab Coats. In addition Zacher played Horatio/Polonius, Horatio as Angel and Churla also performed as The Ghost of Hamlet's Father and The Actor playing Hamlet. Kalki Ortiz was originally part of the cast as a chorus member but had to leave the project at the end of December.

Creative collaborations from outside the University included several people. Reed Bement was the LED technician for the costumes. He helped with the light design of the costumes and built the required custom solution for reusable batteries, chargers and drivers. Matthias Schuster and Trautonia composed original music for the play and joined the team for the performances. The electronic soundscape was accompanied

by Trautonia's live performance of the Theremin. Cordell Whyne created scratchboard figures that Ron Serna then used to create the animation projections.

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All images, other than those noted were done by me.

Part 2: Design Concept and Starting the Design Process “I wrench the clock that was my heart out of my breast”

“The strongest impulse is to pierce through the surface to see the structure”

Heiner Mueller, 1982

2.1 Costume Design Statement

There are three main sources of inspiration for *Hamletmachine*'s costume design. The first two influences are based in Oscar Schlemmer costume design work from 1919 onwards and during his time as the Head of the Theatre Department from 1923 – 1928 at the Bauhaus School for Art and Design in Germany. The focus for this project was to explore and apply in more depth two of his main interests in costume design.

The first influence addresses Schlemmer's interest and work with geometry and the human body in space. He argues in his essay *Man and Art Figure* that “the laws of cubical space are the invisible linear network of planimetric and stereometric relationships.” He continues that “this mathematic corresponds to the inherent mathematic of the human body and create its balance by means of movements, which by their very own nature are determined mechanically and rationally” (23). The four basic costume designs he proposes support his argument that they could provide a “basic and authentic” principle, which he admired in the standardized costumes of the commedia dell'arte (25). From these four standardized costume shapes, Schlemmer argued, the process of individualization begins (Scheper 266). For this project three of his principles have been applied: The asymmetric costume principle “De-Materialization” for Ophelia, the symmetric principle “The Marionette” for Hamlet and the voluminous and equally balanced “Technical Organism” for Gertrud (Schlemmer 27). The chorus was not inspired by these principles but based in the naturalistic human form.

The second influence attests to new technological advancement found in Schlemmer's work. In his essay he remarks that “the possibilities are extraordinary in light of today's technological advancements: precision machinery, scientific apparatus of glass and metal, the artificial limbs developed by surgery, the fantastic costume of the deep-sea diver and the modern soldier and so forth...” (29). He experimented with the integration of new technologies mostly in the form of unusual materials in his costumes. In combination with these materials he also experimented with light by applying materials on different parts of the performers costume to make them recede and precede into the black stage background. This resulted in

fragmenting the familiar human form into geometric shapes or complete abstraction. This effect was initiated through his basic costume shapes, but most prominent in the figure of *The Abstract*. He also enhanced these effects with the use of materials like metal, glass and other reflective materials. He believed that these applications in combination with the actor's movement allowed the onlooker to experience a transcendent theatrical experience.

Project Ophelia set out to experiment with technologies, like LED lights, that have become available for use on stage economically in the last years. In order to achieve a transcendent mood the concrete idea was to integrate them into the costumes so that certain aspects of the body would be lit. Further experiments with black light were planned, as well as textile paints that would be visible in the black light or glow-in-the-dark paint and a range of highly reflective materials were considered.

Since the main parameters for the costume design concept had been in place before I found the play and although they were the guidelines in the search of a suitable play, the challenge was to find a connecting idea that would finalize a successful merging of design and script. Applying a post apocalyptic mode seemed to be the most suitable merging element between Schlemmer and Mueller. It became the third influence and focus for the costume set as well as the other visual and audible aspects of the play. The post apocalyptic mode reflected the context and style characteristic of the play itself. The costumes should be intense and direct, richly dense, forceful, overwhelming at times and fragmented, they should be readable on the metaphorical and symbolic level, they should be at times revolutionary, relentlessly repetitive, and represent the lost human and humanity, the static, the trapped, without beginning and end. The post apocalyptic idea completed all the elements of the Bauhaus inspired design concept, a stylized and geometric based look, the use of LED technology and the defined colour palette.

This colour palette would contrast between bright areas and dark or blacked out areas on the body as Schlemmer successful experiments. The basic colour palette was therefore made up of neutrals such as black, white and a range of grey tones. However, in contrast to Schlemmer's choice of using bright colours usually positioned in the primary range, the accent colors of the post apocalyptic mode required strong hues of reds, purples and oranges for Ophelia to support her dramatic physical change that is steeped in blood. Shades and tints of red/purple/blue for Gertrud in order to represent her age and her status and for Hamlet, an additional range of blues blended into the greys and blacks. This colour palette supported the darkness and fragmentation of a society that is based on industrialization and the wars that have been fought over its wealth.

2.2 Script Interpretation: Concrete Ideas for Movement Restrictions, Challenges

Gertrud was the first figure of *Hamletmachine* that became a concrete design as early as March 2012 (G1). I had a clear picture of who Gertrud was, where she was placed and why she was a significant presence in the play. The process was inspired by the realization of how little space Mueller gave this figure, considering how much impact Gertrud actually had throughout the play. Mueller does not give Gertrud any other action than her eerie entrance in Part 1 Scene 3, when Hamlet announces her appearance with the words “Look what’s growing from that wall... My mother the bride” (Weber 54). It is also significant that Mueller did not write her out of the play, nor does he let her exit at any time, which supports the notion that Gertrud should be present as a figure throughout the entire play. Her figure represents enormous strength. It is important to focus on the permanence and strength that emanates from the idea of a person actually growing through a wall. In fact Muller himself establishes her as a figure that holds power by giving her the line shortly after her entrance addressing Hamlet: “WASH THE MURDER OFF YOUR FACE MY PRINCE/ AND OFFER THE NEW DENMARK YOUR GLAD EYE” (Weber 54). This sentence marks her as a mother and ruler calling to order. In my reading Gertrud became a combination of a strong female Supreme Ruler and Uber-mother, someone who does not need to speak, will convey that she is in charge in order to convey that she is in charge.

I visualized her as a permanent part of the wall structure, attached by root-like tentacles that would grow from her waist and keep her permanently attached to the wall. Because of her status she had to be placed above the heads of all the other figures and the audience, reigning over this post apocalyptic landscape and communicating a frozen state of all beings and actions below her.

As this permanent and trapped female figure who does not speak and barely is able to move she also became a mystical, spiritual representation, as the one who understands the world, where men create the structures in which they decide and rule. This is significant for Ophelia, who is still able to fight, but becomes trapped ultimately in the end. Gertrud represents Ophelia’s future, the one who went before. This idea leads into a final tableau at the end of Ophelia’s call for revolution as Electra in Part 5. This picture became the key image that inspired my interpretation of the other figures.

The fact that an actual person would be attached to a wall at a considerable height allowed me to apply the concept of restriction on the performers body but it posed two great challenges. The first and most important aspect of her costume was safety. The costume was supposed to be worn high above the ground

as part of a set piece that would show just the upper body from above the actress' waist. The lack of arm movement, the angle that her body would have in the costume coming out from that wall and how she then would be anchored within the set piece were the biggest concerns. It was clear that the inner structure of the dress and how it connected to the wall would be responsible for holding her safely in place and this became the first concern that needed to be addressed before the actual costume could be designed. The costume had to provide the actress the most possible mobility within the restraint. Her main movement would be in her waist, her upper body, shoulders and her head, but it was hard to imagine how she could hold herself practically immobile for one and a half hours without any support. Lastly, the placement of some light needed to be integrated into her design. It became clear that several small spotlights needed to be installed around the lower end of the collar, resulting in light shining upwards around her upper body. Some light reflective material could illuminate her indirectly and give her the majestic appearance suitable to her status.

Finding a design for Ophelia took the longest, because it was very important to represent her compelling and balanced complexity that reflected my analysis of her. I was always intrigued by Shakespeare's depiction of Ophelia and always thought that she was a more complex character than usually interpreted. I was troubled by the reduced interpretation of her as a white nighty-wearing woman that grieved on the one hand the loss of her father, the protector and on the other the rejection of her high status lover, which has been described as being the cause of becoming mentally ill. My reading of her was more from the angle that her madness was anger towards the social situation she has been born into and trapped. The underlying text of the original Ophelia evolves around the role of the unmarried daughter of a servant to the Elizabethan court of the late 16th Century Britain. In this male dominated society she is guided, and controlled in how she conducts relationships at court. She is therefore not in control of her physical body, her action and her fate. This could make a young person quite helpless and there would have been no reason to teach her how to intellectually or emotionally comprehend this, but just to obey the system.

Her suicide becomes a claim of agency over her body and respectively over her fate. Not being able to withstand the political pressure being placed onto her she breaks herself open and releases her inner body, which becomes her new self in *Hamletmachine*. Mueller renders Ophelia as a permanent explosion of claiming this agency she has been deprived of in the history of her depiction. For me it was important to remove the *Hamletmachine* Ophelia visually away from the reduced historical cliché and pay attention to this insight.

Mueller's Ophelia is fighting the systems men have created and also defend aggressively, which is a personal story for Ophelia. She is deconstructing her physical self alongside Hamlet in order to free herself from these structures, just to end up in the trapped condition she started from. Although Ophelia's destruction/deconstruction alters her physical body, it is still the place from where she continues to call for the revolution against men. Mueller's stage direction calls for her depiction in a specific clinical way to expose it as a historical myth. Now the way is open for Ophelia, calling for an everlasting revolution as the eternal woman in the voice of Electra, the classical female avenger from the Greek myth.

Ophelia's costume had to do three things. The first was to address her visual metamorphosis throughout the play. The costume had to change completely from Part 1 to Part 5, reflecting the development from a whole and very structured appearance to a look of turning a body inside out and then into a vulnerable state that leads into another structured and trapped look. This curved arch of change reflects the metamorphosis that was about a structural change not about change in her substance. It was also important that in the final tableaux with Gertrud, Ophelia resembles in some ways the trapped look of the woman that went before her, alluding to Ophelia's fate of infinite eternity in which Gertrud has been trapped. This not just connects them as women, but also tells the intangible overarching storyline. The biggest challenge in the realization of Ophelia's dramatic change is to figure out how Ophelia's action of self-destruction is happening, since most of it would be on stage in Part 2.

The second aspect was her shape, the placement of lights and how both relate to each other. I wanted her costume to take up space, because this de-familiarizes the recognizable silhouette of the performers body and I wanted to see how it could merge with the actual stage space. The silhouette for this costume was asymmetrical balanced, because it provided the most dynamic shape for a very active role. The other reason for creating a large costume in the beginning was that it had to provide space for her inner blood business that had to be stored during her performance. This consideration of storing also applied for the LED's, the wiring and the power supply.

The third aspect focused on Ophelia's body restrictions. Most of the elements above served this aspect already: asymmetric geometric shapes that would extend into the space around the body. However, this would apply to the beginning of her metamorphosis. What about the end, when the shapes all dissolve into a more organic structure? Weighing her body down alluded to the insurmountable weight of the metaphorical man-made structure she has to pull with her. The challenge was to find a suitable solution that had the same impact on her movement as in the beginning.

Mueller presents Hamlet as the essence of the European intellectual like Slavoj Žižek, and renders him trapped by dragging along his “overweight brain”. Mueller describes Hamlet as “ a man, who knows more than he can bear, he knows more than he needs in the circumstances in which he lives and forced to live” (Suschke 106). Mueller makes him explode, lets him act and act out. He thinks in the pace of a machine gun, he abuses, kills, rapes and destroys, but he also displays dissatisfaction about the role he is playing, as an actor in the history of Europe and all its systems.

The Hamlet of Mueller’s play reveals how spoiled and dangerous he is, and how dangerous he becomes when he calls on the dead in Part 1. He is bored with his intelligence and needs to be constantly entertained, but he is destroying and hurting everything he calls into the play. Mueller renders Hamlet as an anti-hero, a tyrant, who is struggling with himself, in contrast to Ophelia who knows who she is. Hamlet is also fighting against the structures around him, but he understands both sides of the revolution. As a man he has the freedom to quit the places, the systems in theatre, history and society have assigned to him, “on both sides of the front” (Weber 56).

This analysis resulted in three aspects of Hamlet’s costume that needed attention. Hamlet also goes through a change throughout the play, but unlike Ophelia, he is initiating the change that happens to him. Although he is outing himself in Part 1 Scene 3 as an actor “playing Hamlet”, therefore identifying the theatrical structure he is part of, the actual removal of the visual structure that identifies him as an actor is triggered by the Dead Women in Part 3. This sets off his search for identity, wanting to be a woman, which leads in Part 4 to the stage direction “He takes off make-up and costume” (Weber 55). The removal of costume and make up expose him as a member of the theatre community, practitioner and audience alike. Since his structural change was a reaction, his costume change had to be significant visually. This meant Hamlet’s change had to be from a structural look that would dissolve into a human look, meaning leaving him in the nude when he would quit the play at the end of his Part 4 monologue. Hamlet started as the visual machine man and ended as the machine man he is by nature’s design. His costume arc was the most consequent: from the completely structured, full body mask to the nude and vulnerable that would be the last step of him dissolving out of the system, quitting the theatre structure, the play. So he basically left dressed as a human being.

The second aspect of attention was the shape of the costume and the placement of the lights. The designing process started out vague, but Schlemmer’s Harlequin costume from his Triadic Ballet provided a guideline. The historical connection to his status should be visible so an interpretation of the stereotypical black doublet from the northern European Renaissance would represent his royal pedigree. The use of soft

lines and round shapes would express his weak character and portray the weak, spoiled and tyrannical young man.

Thirdly the restrictions for the actor of Hamlet were not clear from the beginning either. Since Hamlet's intellect is one of the main concerns in Shakespeare's and Mueller's version I was interested to reduce his physical ability to a painful inability. Weighing him right down at the centre of his body had the potential to create the physical laborious slowness and swaying that would be suitable for someone who is catered to as a prince and who does more thinking than moving.

Mueller's Chorus is both confusing and intriguing, when considering what they mean in the bigger picture of the play. His only direct reference to a chorus is in the stage direction at the beginning of Part 2 (Weber 54). He basically created a silent chorus that does not exit or enter and in fact does not do anything, but is just present, like Gertrud. This suggests an association to Gertrud. The question then remained who are the members of the chorus? The solution is revealed in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as the immediate group of people surrounding Gertrud is her court. The court also included the silent roles of Claudius, Horatio, Polonius and the figures unique to Mueller's *Hamletmachine* as there are the Dead Women and The Men in White Lab Coats.

Since the play was situated in a post-apocalyptic mode it was a small step to visualize the court as actually being the dead. This depiction was supported by the fact that the play deals with the end of History in Europe, that there is a lot of dying in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and that Europe's history has been written by the carnage of wars. Death also plays a recurring and significant role in Mueller's work.

“What we need is future and not the eternity of the present. We need to dig up the dead again and again, because only from them can the future be gained” (Suschke, 144).

One interesting factor that became significant was the role the chorus/ minor characters had in relationship to Hamlet. Throughout the beginning of Part 1 Hamlet calls not just Gertrud and Ophelia into being, but also, and more importantly the minor characters: “Here comes the Ghost who made me”, “Enter Horatio”, and “Exit Polonius” (Weber 53-54).

The chorus had three characteristics. Firstly, they had to be easily recognizable visually as a group with some individual characteristics. The Chorus also had to be part of the wider concept of the play, of the set as the courtly landscape that is the seat of supreme/sovereign power, the realm of Gertrud and also metaphorically the structure put in place by a male dominated society. Secondly the structural aspects, the

lighting and the restrictions for the Chorus had to be considered. The costume structure would focus on the internal, the skeletal, which meant that the bones would be highlighted and some part would be blending into the background. The idea of using textile paint for black light or other surface design techniques became of interest in order to emphasize parts of the actor's body. To make the bones project better the rest of the actor's body should recede into the background and the Chorus should wear full body masks. Lastly, the Chorus costumes had to be easily identifiable when they would wear the costume parts or accessories of Horatio, Polonius, Claudius, the Dead Women, or The Men in White Lab-Coats. Special considerations were needed as the costumes of Horatio, Polonius and the Dead Women had to be added and/or removed on stage. I decided that a skeletal concept and accessorizing the minor figures as needed would be the most efficient and practical solution.

2.3 Starting the Designing Process: The Preliminary Designs

After Gertrud, Ophelia was the next focus in the search for concrete shapes and details. Working mainly from the idea of a long dress and structural soft curves, the work progressed into more detailed and body restricting designs. Creating Ophelia's silhouette was a challenge to discover ways of restricting her body using tight skirts, face masks, extending the arms or binding them. The main objective was how to display her as a fighter without making her look like a stereotype, how to incorporate the post apocalyptic without being too literal and the amount of detail needed to portray all those aspects. Eventually I designed a more flowing simpler asymmetrical silhouette. However, the last rendering still did not satisfy any of the parameters, but it created the right look from the perspective of shape. The sleeves eventually inspired me to apply this upside down feel onto her skirt, but make it even more extreme.

This step led to the preliminary design. By then it was clear that Ophelia could wear the protective armor, since she, not Hamlet, is the fighter. The soft round lines of the inverted asymmetrical skirt still worked, as did the idea of the asymmetrical round cushioned collar from which a see-through structured 'veil' could be deployed over her head. This was the costume for her first appearance, mourning her father as Hamlet introduces her. This collar/veil part was supposed to be lit from within and Ophelia was supposed to lose the latter parts as well as the skirt in the Part 2 in order to reveal a bodysuit with asymmetrical padded hips and legs, just adding a black protective mask in this part alluding to her destruction of the rest of her body. The concept was to add an asymmetrical dress with a cape-like hood on top of this bodysuit for Part 5. It was clear from the beginning that the padded areas would open up to let the different red fabrics indicating blood cascade out, which would change the shape of the padding from something firm and concrete into a

dress-like costume that would appear as if a defined clean structure would dissolved into an organic unruly form that would ground her to the floor.

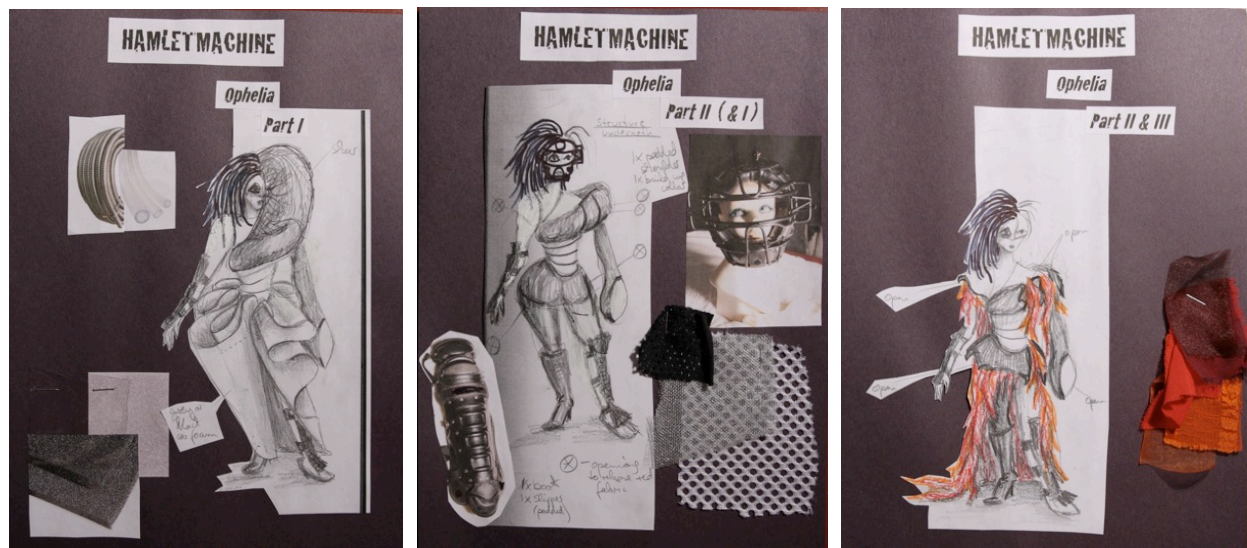


Image 2-1 Ophelia, preliminary design, Part 1 - 3

Part 5 was to be a more dramatic shape through more volume, which meant that another layer of ‘blood’ had to be added onto her entire body, including her head, turning her into a walking organic form. This final layer was meant to be made out of red, pink and purple sweaters, which symbolized the universal fight for women’s rights and their undervalued role in the economic systems this play also addressed. This meaning is generated through the sweaters as complicated historical products of under valued women’s work, and as a product of a contemporary economic system in which women still earn a lower average hourly wage than men (Statistic Canada).

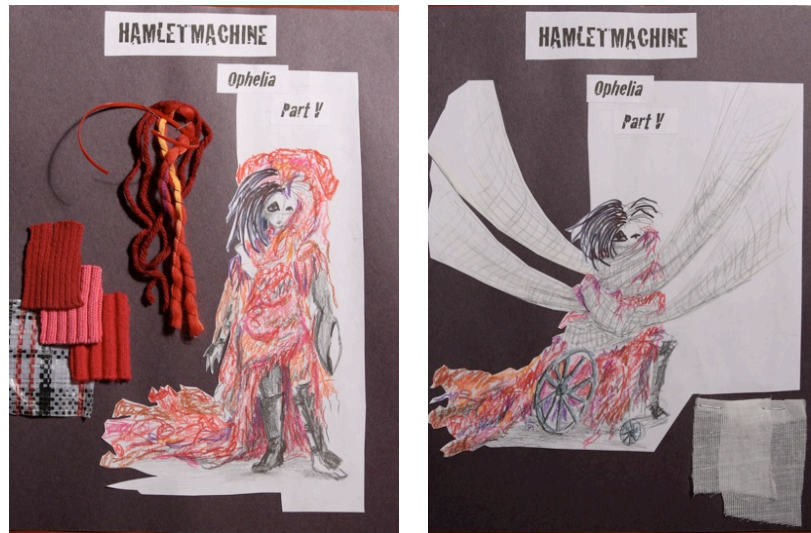


Image 2-2 Ophelia, preliminary design, Part 5

At the costume presentation of the preliminary designs Professor Firkins pointed out that Ophelia's curved skirt would not create enough contrast between her as a woman and the male structure she is fighting against within her appearance.

In the Scherzo, Mueller writes that Ophelia comes on stage “dressed and made up like a whore” and eventually “Hamlet dresses in Ophelia's clothes” and she “puts the make up of a whore on his face” (Weber 55). This piece of costume business taken literally would create an elaborate stage action, and would also be too realistic, which was not of interest. It became apparent that the whore costume needed to be exchanged without giving too much attention to the actual exchange, and therefore it needed to be easy to handle. The solution was contained in the essence of what clothes actually do as social communication. They are markers for individual identity and communal belonging, but they are unstable. What identifies a whore visually is dress, make up and learned behavior. It is a role, which is easily recognizable through its stereotypical markers. Collecting these markers onto a flat surface like a sandwich board for advertising services came to mind. This flatness triggered the idea of a full body size paper doll, which Ophelia could hold in front of her when she would enter and interact with during her striptease in front of Hamlet. It would allow a problem free exchange on stage and it would be a fun object to make, to see and to play with.

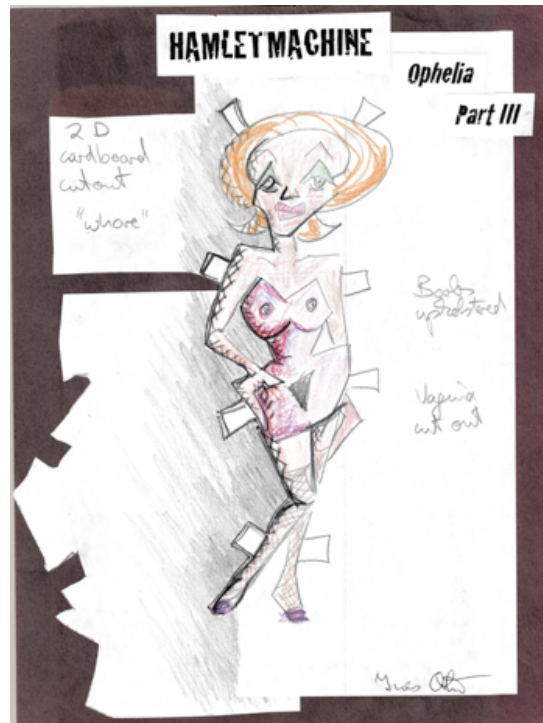


Image 2-3 'Whore', final design

The first design sketches for Hamlet's costume, in contrast to Ophelia's, reflected a conventional approach with volumes of fur, which he could drag along and additional black body armor for protecting himself in his constant state of attacking and lashing out. Eventually the interpretations shifted to the infamous skull, the hiding behind a mask and hoodie, as well as a corset, reflected Hamlet's desire to always be someone else. The idea of masking his face continued so the following sketches reflected the desire to find a more integrated design solution for this idea. The original idea of a royal coat or cloak with body armor allowed a break from the real and ventured into abstraction and fragmentation. However, the designs changed from a static and equally balanced look to an asymmetrically balanced weight distribution. It also became apparent that all of these layers should look broken and detached from a larger piece.

For the preliminary design the entire focus was directed to the weight on his head and upper body, removing the leg protectors. The nakedness around his legs made him look more boyish and vulnerable. The extension of the coat over and in front of his head reduced movement in the upper body, reduced his field of vision through channeling it into a tight slit and further restricted his arms. The inability to use his hands would make him clumsy when he needed to grab something, so one arm became a tube like extension from where cable would spill out and the other arm was just loose cables coming out from the armhole of the coat. This solution left a back door for the actor's hand in case it had to be added after all.

This shape would mean that the lights would point downwards out of the head/shoulder area of his coat, down both arms and from the one tube leg both upwards and downwards.

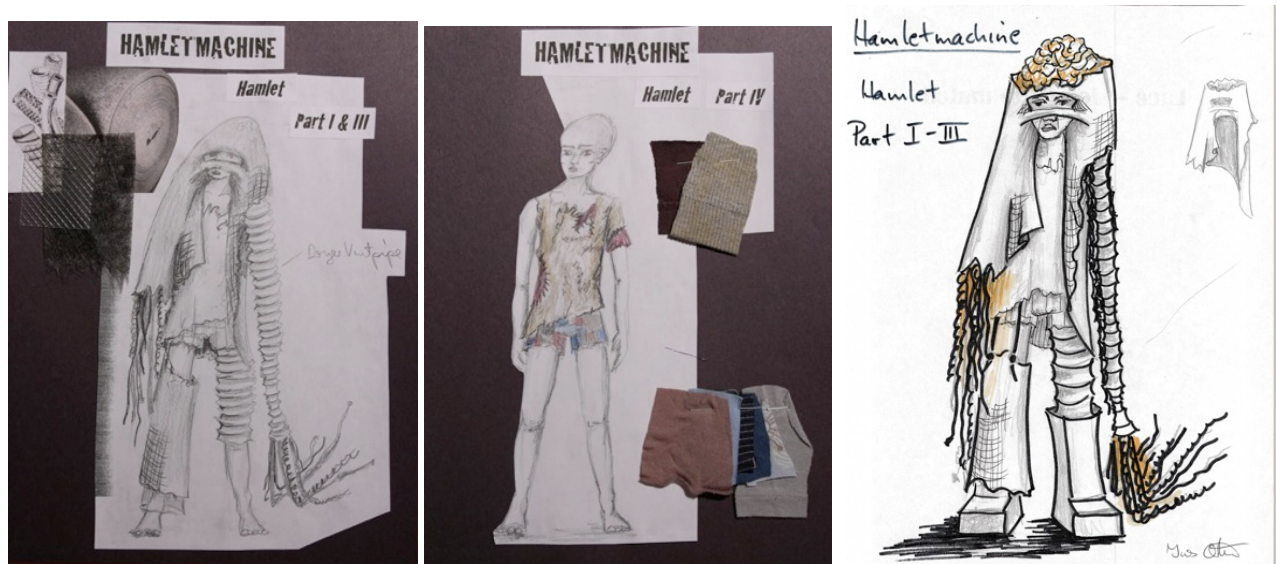


Image 2-4 Hamlet, preliminary design, Part 1 – 4, right: revised preliminary design

The costume for Part 4 would also incorporate fragmented and patched clothing, a shirt and shorts that would be partially visible when he is wearing the other layers. At that point it was not clear how to incorporate the Dead Women in Part 3 who would take off his clothing, but this outfit would be the look before he takes off everything and leaves.

The following parameters for the basic chorus costume were established in the first drawings: they would be the dead members of the Danish court. They also had to look very recognizable as belonging to one system, and as parts of a machine that are easily replaceable. The costumes for the minor characters would be individual, but had to reflect the association with death. The minor characters' costumes developed as if their clothing had been torn from different corpses and reassembled crudely into one garment.

The first skeleton renderings played with asymmetrical components like one high boot and one long sleeve coming out of a symmetric fur collar. The experiments with different shapes and heights of the head made the figures appear a bit larger and menacing than the living, since they represent Gertrude's court. Although the idea of using fur or a real boot did not withstand further scrutiny, it led to the general asymmetric feel and the idea of 'dressing' the skeleton in skin instead of clothing pieces.

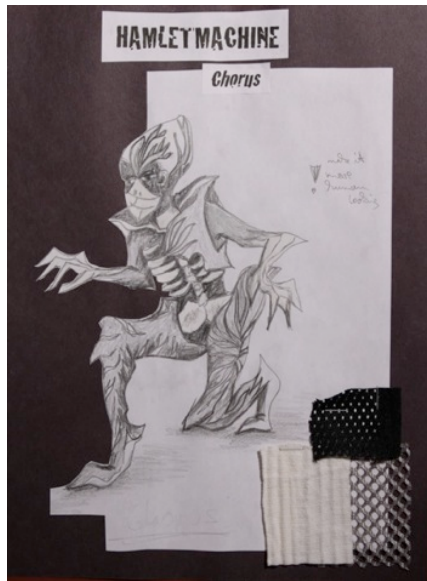


Image 2-5 Chorus, left: preliminary design, right: revised preliminary design

In this preliminary design I wanted to make the skeletons more aggressive and menacing looking, which was achieved by elongating the fingers, feet and the back of the head and by adding details of sharp spiky outlines into the silhouette. The boot inspired a stylized skin that would cover part of the torso in a vest like fashion, both of the legs and the arms. The skin would appear to be ripped apart revealing the skeletal structure underneath. The addition of suggested blood vessels on the surface of the skin parts finished the costume. The original idea of oversized headpieces was changed to elongating the head. Like Gertrud, the chorus does not speak and this bond needed to be addressed in a visual way. The large skulls in the first design were without jaws suggesting they were mute, indicating the inability to speak, but since the design became more human looking the solution was simply to wrap of their mouth, alluding to the idea of being silenced after death. The mystery of this eternal inability to speak of the secrets and crimes committed in the life before (probably in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*) supported the notion that Gertrud and the Chorus had to communicate through their vision.

Gertrud's design did not need any change to be presented as preliminary sketches so the focus could be on the colours and materials for her costume. In order to make her grand and visible at a 10' height the use of highly reflective material would make the intended indirect lighting stronger and the play with light an interesting theme to further investigate. The choice for her corset was a burgundy and black colored fake leather with an embossed reptile pattern, her collar was to be made of a found black crab trap, covered by a shiny black Christmas netting and her skirt was made out of a patchwork of rag carpets in tints and shades

2.4 Findings and Changes

Hamlet machine
Ophelia
Part I

A sketch of a costume for Ophelia Part I. The outfit features a white, asymmetrical, draped top with a large, textured, orange-brown triangular piece on the right side. The bottom is white with a large, textured, orange-brown triangular piece on the right side. The character is wearing black boots with white laces and a black belt with a silver buckle. The background is a dense, black, scribbled pattern.

Hamlet machine
Ophelia
Part II

A sketch of a costume for Ophelia Part II. The outfit features a white, asymmetrical, draped top with a large, textured, orange-brown triangular piece on the right side. The bottom is white with a large, textured, orange-brown triangular piece on the right side. The character is wearing black boots with white laces and a black belt with a silver buckle. The background is a dense, black, scribbled pattern.

Hamlet machine
Ophelia
Part III

A sketch of a costume for Ophelia Part III. The outfit features a white, asymmetrical, draped top with a large, textured, orange-brown triangular piece on the right side. The bottom is white with a large, textured, orange-brown triangular piece on the right side. The character is wearing black boots with white laces and a black belt with a silver buckle. The background is a dense, black, scribbled pattern.

The advantage during the redesigning process was that the methodology of how to make the actual costume became more apparent since the challenge of patterning asymmetrical curved lines had become obsolete. The main garment piece now was a full bodysuit, separate from the top. It led to the complete removal of the skirt and was replaced with an even more extreme padded hip part on the proper right that would taper down the leg into a natural hem width, covered by an above knee boot. The padding of the other leg would naturally fit close to the body and create a good contrast to the artificial limb shapes of the other leg. This leg as well as the proper right arm would still be covered by sport armor.

From this point it also became clear that the dress for Part 5 had to be a separate one and even larger than previously anticipated, matching the new bigger volume of the revisited designs. The costume for Part 5 became a dress with a wide skirt, made completely out of red knitted sweaters. The arm and leg protectors were gone now as well. Their removal resulted in a vulnerable contrast between the large size of the costume and the bare skin of her shoulders, arms and legs. Although liberating after the full covered and armored body of the body suit, Ophelia would present a different visual of entrapment through the contrast of overwhelming costume and the vulnerable body. It became an exciting concept and I could not wait to see it at work.

The emphasis on Hamlet's intellect during the costume presentation made me realize that there was not enough weight on his head. The revelation that the brain should be huge and exposed, as if it broke open the skull, also led to the redesigning of his footwear (see Image 2.4). The addition of more weight to his boots affected his action, counteracting the actor's potentially fast pace speech and the urge to move too fast.

Throughout the process of drawing the preliminary sketches for the Chorus, especially the details of the 'skin' parts of the costume, but also the legs and arm-bodice solution, it became clear that the look was not working yet. The problem was that the skeleton resembled aliens. Playing with different colours and removing the blood vessel design on the body did not change the fact that the association to aliens would divert the play into a science fiction realm. A redesigned chorus resulted in reversing the head into a round form, the removal of the Egyptian mouth bandages, as well as a reshaping of hands and feet back into a more human appearance. Adding bone structure to the arms, legs and feet reinforced the appearance of a skeletal body covered by fragmented skin parts (see Image 2.5). The mouth issue could not be solved at this point, but at least the allover shape became agreeable again.

Gertrud's design did not need any changes at this point, but it became clear that her design was at the core of the entire costume set. By testing her design repeatedly against the design developments of Ophelia and Hamlet in order to create a coherent costume set revealed that Gertrud was the original source idea and guideline for the costume design of this project.

This preliminary designing process stretched over several months and because of the complexity of the costumes, their role in the play and the countless unknown factors it became apparent that this process would continue until the workshop performances. The most urgent issue was a testing of the possibilities of

the light in the costumes, the available light sources, their technical requirements, illuminative capabilities and their ability to be integrated into the actual costumes. Experimenting in a stage setting as soon as possible was a main priority.

Part 3: The Construction Process and The First Test “I want to be a machine”

“...I like the working process better than the making of a product”

Heiner Mueller 1993

3.1 The Rehearsal Costumes: Materials and First Steps

The actors joined the process in the beginning of November and so their actual measurements became available. The designs could be adjusted to their body characteristics and the pattern-making process could begin. This also meant that the work on the actual costumes could finally start. Most of the materials used in this project were repurposed materials and from a variety of sources: Clothing that had been donated by the UBC costume shop, clothing from private donors or from second hand stores, and clothing and material from my stock. Larger amounts of leftover foam was donated by a foam manufacturer, and wires, cables and tubes were gathered from the recycling depot

Hamlet's armor was the first costume we translated into a rehearsal costume. McCartney and Cheung build an inner structure with plastic strapping around the baseball armor and covered it with low-density foam replicating the shape of the technical sketch of the coat. The drawing also shows the approach for the understructure of Hamlet's costume. The basic concept evolved around rags and structure. In this first approach cut up pieces of two old t-shirts were draped onto a canvas base. On top of it draped bits and pieces of heavy-duty twill tape, grosgrain ribbon and webbing made of polyester, cotton and Nylon was laid out into a bondage structure. Making the mock-up of the tube arm was a time consuming endeavor because the shape needed many, tedious pattern. The order was challenging to keep for a canvas mock-up, but finding suitable material for the real arm was difficult. This needed to be durable and pliable and also let the light through that was planned to go along the inside of it. We eventually hit a dead end and put the entire idea aside for the time being, hoping that a solution would come at a later time in the process. Weighing the boots down was easy to do and just as important and we continued using the rubber boots from the auditions and Fukumoto taped sandbags to the sides of them.



Image 3-1 Hamlet, left: construction drawing, middle: understructure, right: rehearsal costume

During the first rehearsals with Preston we worked very intensely on the possibilities of movements within the confines of the costumes. I wanted Preston to keep his path of movement in a round pattern, with different sizes of circles, semi-circles, swirls and concave walks. For the longest time we tried different ways of walking with dragging feet, but that did not do a lot for his presence. A Kabuki video inspired Preston to evolve his walk into a throwing of the feet, expanding his walk from side to side. It was the heaviness we were looking for and it became his entrance walk and the guideline for his style of walking. After a while we were able to define more specific movements and body postures to display an inner state of being and we identified a word-and-sound repetition as his style of speech.

Ophelia's rehearsal costume began with the top that she would wear over the bodysuit. An old stretch corset on its side served as the base for the top and draping a foam ball into the desired shape on top of it took care of the shape. Reusing plastic straps made up the shape of Ophelia's leg and by covering it with low-density foam the structure stayed light in weight. The club arm was made in the same manner. We had used the rehearsal leg and the club arm already for the auditions, and the pieces were immediately natural for Canero to move in, so that we integrated the movements into her entrance in Part 1. Besides adjusting the timing to the other players on stage we did not need to change anything. The movement path for Ophelia was a grid pattern of perpendicular and diagonal line segments and her style of speech became a switching of levels, volume, pitch and a switching of dynamics between forceful and flat.



Image 3-2 Ophelia, rehearsal costume

The sweater dress was pivotal to the blocking of Part 5. For the rehearsals we built a skirt with a big train out of a huge donated curtain that covered our rehearsal costume rack, so it served two purposes. A belt at the waist gathered the curtain together and again we made do with what we had. The restrictions on Canero's movement in the symmetrical sweater dress would be different than in the asymmetrical bodysuit. The symmetrically balanced upper part of the dress, which came up from her waist and billowed from behind over her head, restricted the flexibility in her upper body. It was constructed that her arms could go through the sides but it definitely restricted the radius of her arm and shoulder movements. The main obstacle, however, was the weight and the size of the skirt. Canero had to pull the skirt with her waist and after trying a few ways of moving we settled for a walk that was reminiscent of a Balinese temple dancer in slow motion.

The promo shoot we were about to set up for the first workshop was to show Canero in her red sweater dress so it became the first costume we started to actually build. However, we had to postpone it to the middle of January due to problems with the prosthesis. The work on the sweater dress had to stop and the focus was on Ophelia's full bodysuit. It was clear from the beginning that this costume would be incredibly difficult to make and it needed a lot of time to think through every step well before pursuing it. The deadline for a prototype of the bodysuit was established for the first workshop. Although it was not ready at that point for the adding of any light it was important to see the actual proportions of the costume and

where the design lines would be, since they would determine how the openings would actually work. It also became more evident that the proper fabric would be a medium weight, but tightly knit polyester jersey with some elastane content.



Image 3-3 Ophelia, first mock-up of bodysuit

It was much more challenging to find a suitable rehearsal costume for Gertrud. First we used a kneeling chair, but since we practiced movements in the beginning of the rehearsal process for full days Sekiya found it too hard on her body over a long period of time and we settled on a black stage box. Because we could not use the real structure for the rehearsal until the tech week, we used the black box as the simulation for the structure throughout the rehearsal period. It was unfortunately not possible to give her anything else to practice in since it was not clear until February how this structure would actually look. The actual design of it would greatly impact the look and construction solutions of the costume that would go over it.

In the rehearsal hall we agreed that Sekyia would use her arms in order to support her search for finding an upper body posture and head movement until it would be strong enough to be read clearly even without arms. Realizing how extreme the restriction through the removal of arm movement was, this idea began to turn more into a reversal. The most significant test would be how her body movements would be read during the first workshop.



Image 3-4 left: Gertrud in rehearsal, right: Chorus, rehearsal costume

The rehearsal costumes for the chorus came in place surprisingly quickly. In order to simulate in some way the restriction of ankles and wrists we used for the rehearsals two sets of second-hand skateboard protection, which came from a sports equipment garage sale at a very low cost. It was not clear at this point to what extent legs and arms would be covered, or the actual material that would work for these ‘skin’ substitutes.

Another unsolved aspect of the design for the chorus needed to be addressed at that point. The question was how to muzzle the chorus in an elegant and creative way. During a conversation, the property master Lynn Burton mentioned the original idea of using huge masks without the lower jaws and came up with an idea. She suggested that it would not be a problem to make them out of the heavy-duty paper she was about to throw out. To the question of what we could use for rehearsal Burton offered the horse masks that had been built for another show, so the masks would become reality after all.

There was no specific thought yet of how the minor characters would exactly look, but that changed when the costume department donated a large amount of clothing to our project. The original idea of making costumes that looked fragmented and tattered became more elaborate since a significant amount of clothing could now be integrated at no cost.

The amount of uncertainty during this part of the process was exciting but also seemed to be endless. The actors were enthusiastic, but struggled with the play, their role in it and the concept of restrictions. The focus during the first six weeks was completely on finding and developing movements that were always accompanied by some electronic soundscapes. During other rehearsals the experiments evolved around the

text by using the voices as sound generators. The absence of blocking or using speech with the movements caused impatience at times and provoked the question of what this was all about. Fortunately the questions were coming, although contradictory answers sometimes met unsatisfied receivers.

3.2 Lighting up the Stage with Costumes: the First Workshop

For the workshop we gave Canero the bodysuit prototype, the rehearsal top and club arm as well as the sports protection. We did not place any lights in the bodysuit but used one self-adhering LED light from the dollar store in the collar and another one in her club arm. The LED in the collar had five light sources, while the one in the club arm had three light sources.

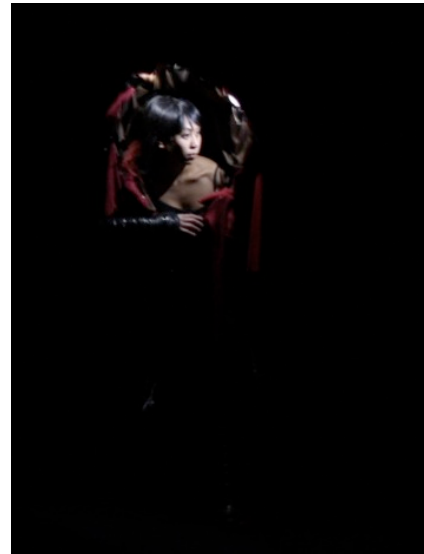


Image 3-5 Ophelia, workshop 1

This workshop was a great chance to try the upper part of her sweater dress, which was at that point just a wire structure. Before we would continue to cover it with the final layer it was important to check on its durability and comfort in movement. We improvised with pinning a few sweaters onto the ‘cage’ as it became known, and lined it with some dark brown, high-luster knit of unknown fiber content for the workshop. Light technician Reed Bement and I decided to position three bright white one watt LED’s at three different places within the ‘cage’, framing her face. In foresight Bement brought a light level control for the LED’s, which we had to use since the light was incredible powerful. This control allowed us to reduce the light level down to just 30%, which was still astonishingly bright.

Preston wore his rehearsal costume for the day and we tried his brain for the first time. Squire thermoformed it out of clear plastic and we improvised with a conventional Christmas string of twenty-five white incandescent light bulbs. To power it we had to attach an extension cord. We were also trying out an LED flashlight in Hamlet's foam tube arm.



Image 3-6 Hamlet, workshop, left: with Horatio, right: with Ophelia and Gertrud

The more human-looking design was basically the shape of the chorus, which we went into during the first workshop. In preparation for this weekend it was most important to see the light reflexivity of white fabric, how it behaved in full black light, in partial black light, and in proximity to the LED lights in the other costumes. Additionally some tests were supposed to show if the textile paint for black light could be used to create a molding effect on the bones, in order to give them the illusion of a third dimension. The bones for this stylized skeleton were made out of white polyester/elastane fabric and stitched onto a leotard. The paint was applied to the proper right pelvis and the two top ribs on the proper left side. Since we just had one bodysuit, Zacher volunteered and wore it throughout the day. She moved alone and with Ophelia and Hamlet through the space. We added the horsehead to the suit, in which Won-Kyoon placed an iridescent flashlight, and we observed the suit close to Canero's costume that was emitting LED light.



Image 3-7 Chorus, workshop 1

The workshop was the first possibility to use a more elevated solution for Sekiya from which we all could get more sense of height in relation to the other figures in the play. Because Sekiya was afraid of heights she was not ready yet to climb a ladder, but the stage boxes were a good start to try some light with her. First we looked at the idea of giving her some ‘eyes’ out of light, which could lighten the area on the floor wherever she looked at, basically the effect of a moving spotlight. For that Bement tried two different kinds of headlamps: one had three LED bulbs in it, and the other one had five. Both were too dim to use on their own so we also let Sekiya wear them at the same time (see image 3.6). We also tried some indirect lighting. We placed the woven wire tubing on her fingers and let it extend a little bit, then gave her a flashlight with incandescent bulbs to hold in the palm of her hand with the other hand and play with her fingers against the light. This effect emphasized her fingers in an interesting way and threw an intriguing pattern against the backdrop.

3.3 Findings from the Workshop

After assessing the pictures from the workshop in regards to the red sweater dress we agreed that the ability to change the light levels in the LED was a necessity. Since we would not know yet the actual and accurate real circumstances of either the costumes or the stage environment, it became obvious that we needed to be able to control the levels of light output in as many costumes as possible.

The workshop also produced results in regards to Ophelia's full bodysuit and club arm that looked promising. The light in the collar of the bodysuit worked well. It placed the face in a great fragmented light from the side and it would dramatize Canero's face even better when the light would be more focused and not spraying through the foam. The club arm worked better with the five LED-light lamp instead of the three, which was just not strong enough. The only thing that needed to be solved was the positioning of Canero's hand in relation to the lamp in the tip of the club arm, so the hand would not cover the light.

It was a big step that Canero considered the improvised cage of the red sweater dress comfortable, but also spoke of the challenges doing certain movements. The cage stood up well and the only change in regards to the light was the repositioning of one from the front and to the lower back, shining upwards. That gave her a great surrounding light and the shading it created on one side of her face continued to be her unique dramatization carried over from the full bodysuit. The dark lining of the cage was too dim, so a lighter colored fabric could be used in addition to some reflective material that hopefully would diffuse the spotlight effect a little bit.

Trying out aspects of Hamlet's costume, especially his brain resulted also in usable findings. Placing light in the brain was a good direction to pursue but it was too bright and the single bulbs were recognizable so we had to find a suitable way of diffusion. The foam arm did not work with its concentration of light in one place, it seemed out of place. Additionally the arm seemed seem too much of a restriction and drew too much attention. This might have been caused by the use of an inappropriate material, but since the search for finding something more pliable was without success the arm was taken out for good. To imagine the wires hanging down exposed on both sides of Hamlet's arms inspired me to see them as lifelines, as blood vessels that Hamlet had himself cut off from the structure his male-dominated ancestry represented. This emphasis on the lifelines could be achieved with several red and blue el-wires that would run along with the cables, ideally pulsing in the beat of a heart. The removal of the tube arm also led to the realization that the cut up t-shirts used for his shirt did not go anywhere either. It was too busy and clashed with the detail-oriented strap structure on top. This strap structure had stronger symbolic value so a new solution for underneath was needed.

The experiments with the chorus costume resulted also in some unexpected and interesting findings. The softness and warmth of the yellow incandescent light in the rehearsal head created a strong contrast with the cold white color of the fabric in the black light and the cold white LED's in Ophelia's costume. The cold light of the LED's, which is more on the blue side, worked best with the post-apocalyptic theme.

The fabric paint did not produce a satisfying result. Although it showed up as a slight bluish grey coloration, the paint did not have a strong enough effect to be considered as a molding shadow for the bones. A significant finding, however, came from a rather accidental observation, which steered the idea of giving the skeleton some three-dimensionality into a different direction. Zacher wore white tennis socks at the workshop. The cotton content of the socks had been treated with a white and wrinkle retainer, which increases the effect of the white, making it appear whiter in the black light than the untreated polyester/elastane textiles of the bones. This effect resulted in the awareness that fabric with different fiber content, different tints of white and different textures could be used for the bones to create a more patchwork look in the black light. This decision was also conducive to the fact that we could use fabric remnants, which were easy to find at no cost.

The workshop led to the conclusion that the contrast between the white fabrics and the black background using just black light was strong. We tried movements that would animate the spine and it became apparent that to achieve a strong contortion of the spine would take a lot of effort and practice from the actors to have a noticeable effect. Since it seemed too difficult to implement for the chorus and not strong enough as an effect the contortion could be applied right into the design of the costume. This would give the actors a head start and hopefully would result in an even wider play of the two-dimensional picture plane the chorus had to work on. The effect of the white fabric in proximity to other light sources was acceptable, but the bigger problem was that the black shimmer of the bodysuit became readable. This added onto the unfortunate fact that the body shape of the actors became very quickly visible when another light source beside the black light was used. That was the greatest challenge to deal with and some decisions of priority had to be made.

The aftermath of the workshop also yielded a change that first looked like a catastrophe but became the silver lining in the end. Up until the workshop three members made up the chorus, but our only male member, Ortiz, left the project during the Christmas break. After some consideration I decided not to replace him, since it seemed possible to continue with just the two remaining actors. The only challenges that had to be solved were a couple of quick costume changes. One chorus member who played one of the Dead Women in the third part had to change into Claudius in the same part right after the first scene and then change again into one of the “Men in White Lab Coats” for part 5. Choosing the skeletons as a base costume and adding the minor characters through accessories became a stroke of luck at that point, because none of the quick changes looked easy. The biggest advantage, however, was that one less chorus costume had to be made.

The results for Gertrud's costumes were not as satisfying. Even using both headlamps at the same time did not provide enough light on the ground to create a following spotlight. Also, if she would be higher up it would need an even more powerful light source in order to provide the desired effect. A more powerful light source wasn't possible for technical reasons, which unfortunately moved the idea for Gertrud's light beam eyes off the table. The effect of the flashlight shining through her fingers, the way it could be used to play with and create light patterns on areas like the backdrop was interesting, but was probably not enough light either. Trying the light in the tubing led however to the application on a larger scale. The next test would try the possibility of threading LED's through the woven wire tubing that could potentially make great tentacles extending from her onto her wall.

The workshop proved to be significant for not just seeing the first costume ideas on stage, but also and more importantly experimenting with a variety of lights. The transcendent and dark qualities of some of the images had a sublime quality and looked potentially eerie but almost too serene. It became evident that the complexity needed to be well thought through. On a conceptual level the first workshop represented the skeleton of this production: the focus on the visual; primarily the costumed body of the actor and their lighting from within; movement and the creation of space through all these elements. The workshop marked the beginning of the actual process with all its possibilities. In the end, this workshop helped crew and cast to become more excited about the project and where it was going, even though the workshop did not contribute to the actor's familiar understanding of the text as the actor's work material.

After this workshop the real work on the project began and although everybody left for the Christmas break, many things needed to be prepared for when the sweater dress would be finished in time for the photo shoot.

Part 4: Second Test and The Workshop Shows “Under the sun of torture”

“Everything that has strength and effect
can also have the wrong effect when it is manipulated”

Heiner Mueller 1993

4.1 Construction, Challenges and a Fieldtrip to the UBC Power Plant

Although the red sweater dress was the first costume we actually started to build in November, it went into full gear after the first workshop in order to get it ready for the photo shoot in February. The cage of cloth hangers and zip locks had been reworked after the first workshop into a sturdy structure. Their ends were secured in a leather corset and the entire structure had been covered with a mesh, leaving an opening for Sarah’s arms. McCartney and Fukumoto sewed the sweaters onto the ‘cage’ and the neckline was finished with pieces of knitted and crocheted bands. The inner structure of the skirt was made out of six wire straps connected to a metal belt at the waist. The long metal wires were covered with chicken wire, batting and fabric and the sweaters were sewn right on top of them.

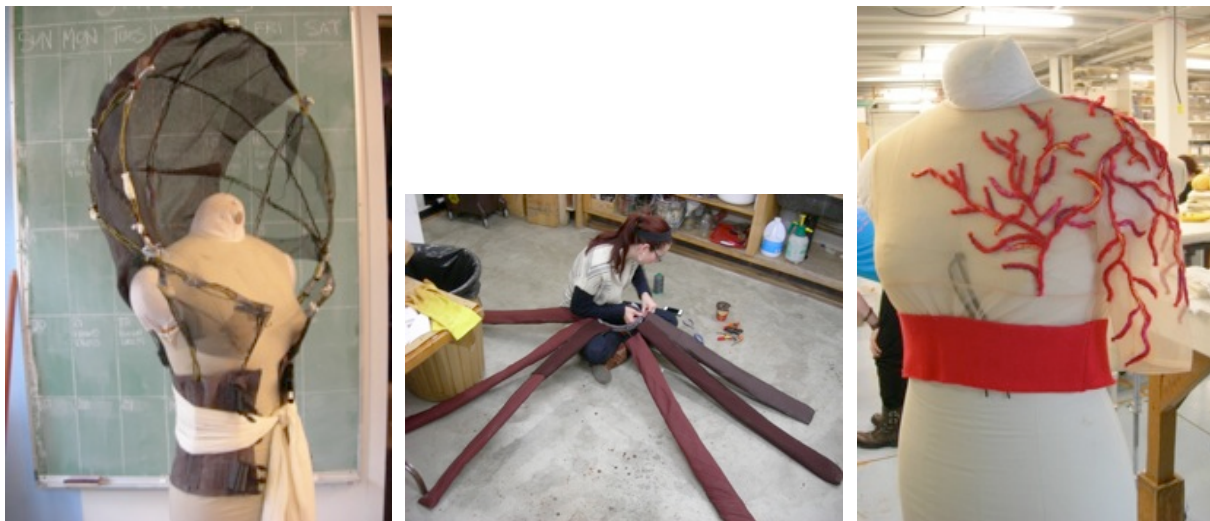


Image 4-1 Ophelia, left: 'cage', middle: skirt structure, left: top underneath 'cage'

Underneath this big and very open skirt a red mini-skirt decorated with red fabric swirls was fitted and for her torso we made a nude jersey top decorated with embroidery out of wool, resembling blood vessels that indicated the significance of her heart. There are two heart references in the text, the first one is by Hamlet

at the end of Part 1: “Then let me eat your heart, Ophelia, “ and at the end of Part 2 when Ophelia says: “ I wrench the clock that was my heart out of my breast” (Weber 54-55). The heart prop became a digital clock attached to a bomb, alluding to the revolutionary stance of Ophelia.

The photo shoot was fast approaching and the trial for the make-up and prosthesis a week before the shoot looked promising but the problems with the prosthesis prevented a successful outcome and we had to stop the shoot without a satisfying result. We looked for another make-up artist and rescheduled the shoot for two weeks later, but eventually decided that Fukumoto, McCartney and Canero would take care of hair and make-up. On Saturday 2 March we had a photo shoot. The result was used for our promotion purposes and became the image for the posters and flyers.

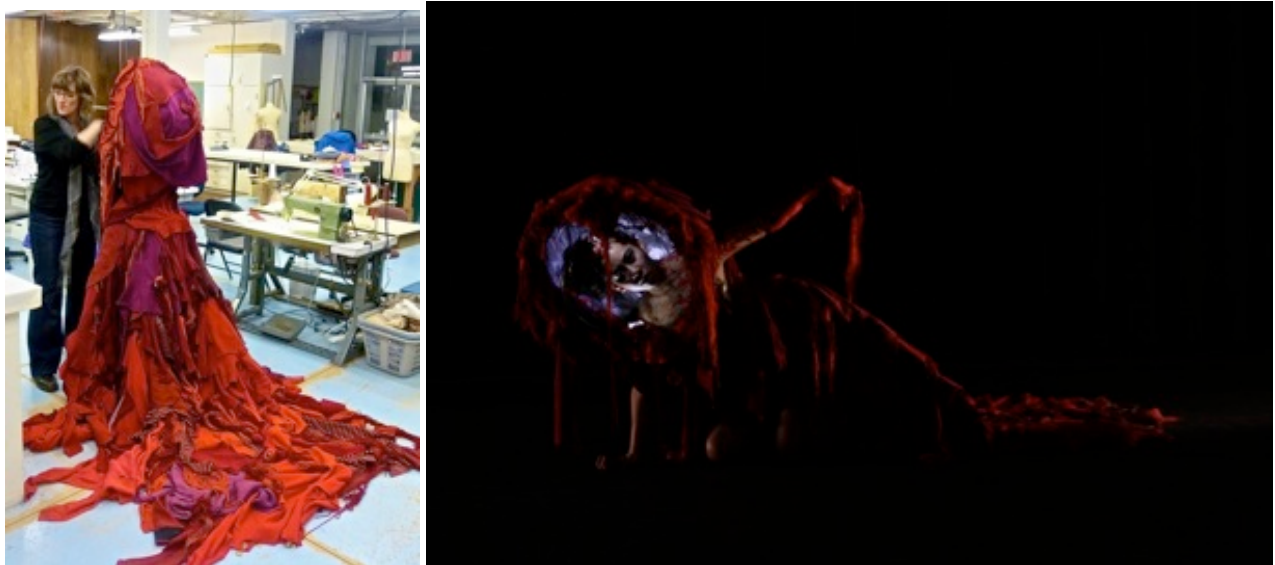


Image 4-2 Ophelia, red sweater dress, left: (courtesy of Deb Pickman), right: promo shoot

After the photo shoot the attention had to shift back to Ophelia’s bodysuit. The construction challenges were manifold. Because of the slow process there was no time to make another mockup. I had to take the risk and made the entire bodysuit with its more than seven layers right into the costume for the final workshop. After deciding on the design lines the real work on the bodysuit started and many things still needed to be figured out, for example, the openings at the shoulder and the leg. Also a decision needed to be made about the order of opening and what kind of closure would be most suitable. Magnets and snap tape with extra hooks were in consideration but zippers seemed to be the most feasible solution. Then there was the question of what materials to use for the inner structure: what was suitable for the need of stability as well as flexibility? Where should it be placed and how to construct it? It was important that when the

pieces were opened the parts could flap open, yet at the same time they should be sturdy enough to have a smooth surface in their closed position. The leg needed the most attention. The patterns existed but how to connect them was unclear; the exact dimensions had to be established; the type and positioning of the different boning; the place of the shelf that would hold the blood fabric. There were also the questions of where and how and what type of electronics that needed to be addressed, as well as all the lining and the zipper business. Everything needed to be in place so that when the leg was closed none of the layer's edges would press through. This was daunting considering that it also needed to be very flexible and as lightweight as possible. The first fitting in the actual bodysuit revealed many issues.

It was also time to work on the top for the bodysuit as well as the club arm. The top would be a three-dimensional object just as the two limbs of the bodysuit. To make the actual piece it was important to define all the layers, the positioning and their dimension as well as the method of closure. The solution was to make a pattern of the lining and the self, a mock-up and the collar would be draped right on the mock-up.

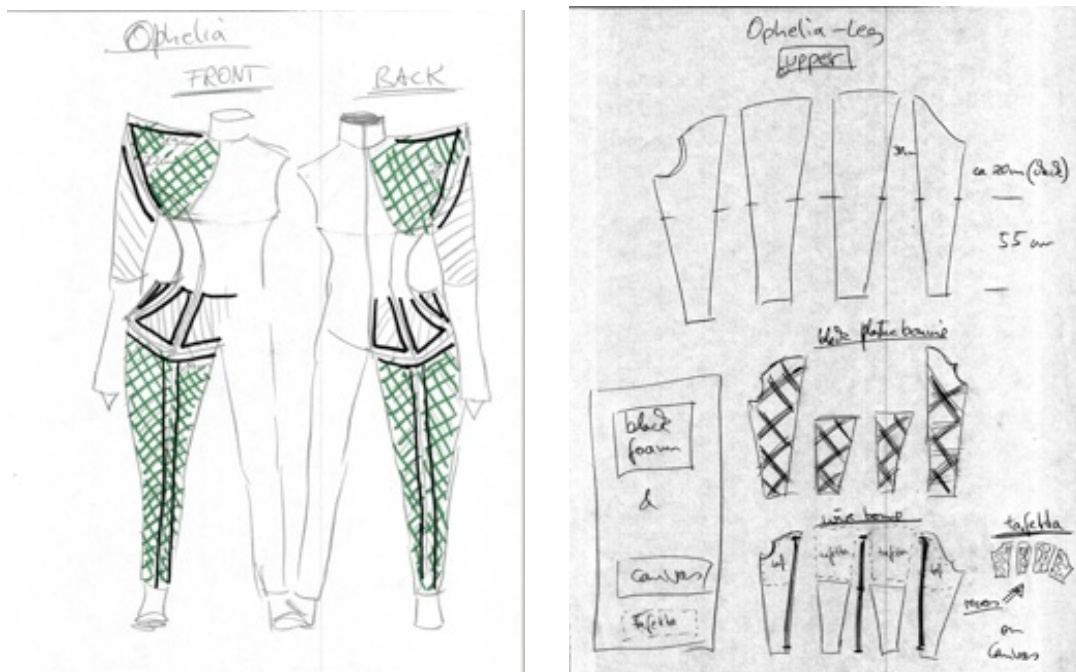


Image 4-3 Ophelia's bodysuit, drawings, layers of inner structure

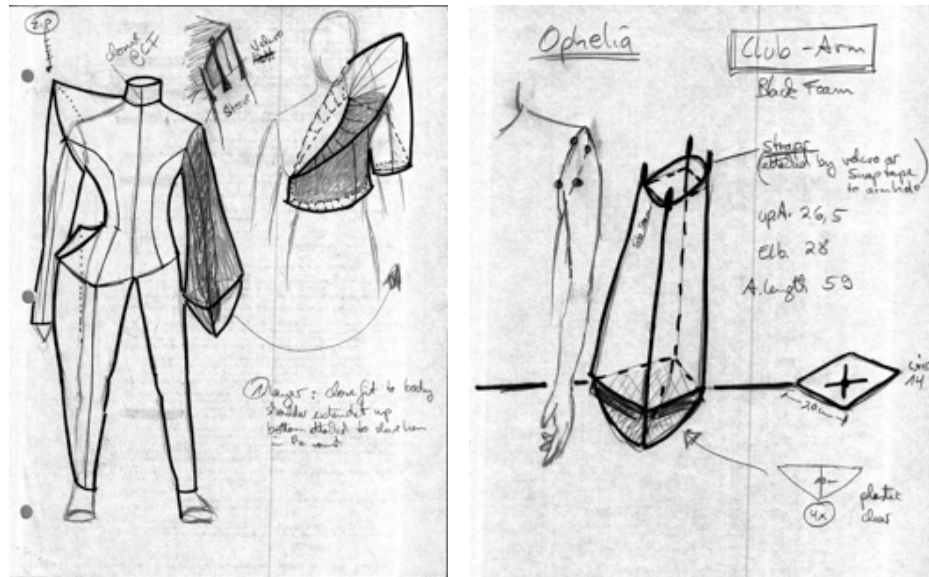


Image 4-4 Ophelia's bodysuit, drawing of top and clubarm

Originally the club arm was supposed to be attached with strips and snaps onto the armhole of the bodysuit, but a closer look at its construction revealed that it actually lent itself to be held through the narrowness of the wrist, which made a connection to the bodysuit obsolete.

It was also time to look at the construction of the paper doll. In order to transfer the exact look of the preliminary design into life-size, McCartney scaled the drawing by using the grid method. The objective for the costume was to use materials that we had already. We ended up using two layers of reinforced cork foam and sandwiched a cloth hanger structure in between to keep it stable and flat. The image would be glued to the front and covered with torn bits from womens magazines, particularly images of women's faces, painted lips for shadows and other pictures related to the beauty industry. This would support on another more detailed level the idea of the superficiality of stereotyping, especially regarding one of the most classical archetypical roles for women, the whore, and bring the stereotype through accumulation of symbols to the flattest plane possible.



Image 4-5 'Whore', construction of the paper doll

Gertrud's costume still was evolving around its most basic challenge, finding a solution for her positioning within the set structure. Initially we were thinking of screwing a kneeling chair onto a platform from which Sekiya could lean forward. A harness around her waist would secure a certain amount of forward movement. In early January Lai presented a structural design that would become the basis for the inner structure of the dress. The actual costume had to be redesigned in accordance with this structure, which meant that this had to wait not just until a decision was made regarding the design of the structural base but until it had been actually built.

Knowing that it was crucial for Sekiya to get used to the height the department agreed to build the structure for her as soon as possible. Almost immediately after Molly Lai and Becky Burks joined the team in January as Set Designer and Technical Director respectively they started looking with Keith Smith at the possibilities for making it. Shortly after the structure was built in February it was erected in the wings of the Freddy Wood Stage for Sekiya to practice on. Practicing with this structure at the rehearsals was unfortunately not possible, since it had to stay in its place until its final move to the Dorothy Somerset Studio during tech week. This meant that we continued to use a stage box during the rehearsals.

It became clear at that point that it would take a while for Sekiya to get comfortable with the height and the forward movements in the structure. Considering her discomfort with height and the work that was still required to make her comfortable, the inherent difficulty of this silent role and the lack of scripted action led to the decision to add arms to her costume after all. The lack of a rehearsal costume added to the

difficulty she faced and it became more important to help her find a way of understanding her role at all. I was hoping that the arms would give her enough material to work with.



Image 4-6 left: Gertrud structure, middle & right: Chorus, individualized designs

During the Christmas Break the final shape for the chorus costumes evolved. The main objective was first to enlarge the silhouette of the costumes in proportion to the skull masks and secondly to start and individualize each chorus member. Zacher's tall frame lent itself to overemphasize the vertebra into a stiff look, while for Churla's curvy figure the vertebra became overemphasized into a contorted appearance. During the fitting the results were passed on to Squire so he could play with them and reflect them in their masks.

It was also time to look at the materials for the costumes and their construction. The order of full bodysuits with attached heads, hands and feet that closed with a zipper in the back came right after the workshop. The light reflective qualities in the fabric caused a concern as it was shown in the workshop, but these bodysuits were the only feasible solution considering time and money. We were able to use white fabric remnants from the shop for the bones and picked a wide variety of different textured white or off-white fabrics. To give the shoulder, arm and leg bones some strength we experimented with several ideas but decided that the best solution would be foam and wire core, covered with batting and the upper, shaped fabric would hold it in place. The bones were attached to each other by stitching together the wires that had been looped at the end. To attach the bones to the costume we first stitched them right onto the bodysuit, but they were unexpectedly heavy and especially the shoulder bones pulled the suit too much out of shape. To assure the structural integrity I made a tight fitted vest out of black cotton twill and we stitched the bones onto it. The

vests came with an additional advantage in regards to the shine of the body suit fabric since the light absorbing qualities of cotton now covered the upper body. The need to find a safe attachment solution for the leg bones led to an additional design development. On a wide belt made out of cotton twill we attached batted cushions at the sides of the body. The leg bones would be sewn onto these hip cushions to extend away from the body. This would allow them to move freely and it was interesting to see the possibilities in the movements of these seemingly detached legs, especially the level of unpredictability.



Image 4-7 Chorus, fitting of base costume

The minor characters played by the chorus actors were at this point awaiting the development of the base costumes, since the final shape of the base costume would profoundly influence the design of the minor characters. This became particularly true with the bone extensions, which resulted in a higher and wider silhouette. The donated coats and jackets, sweaters and skirts were perfect for creating the ragged look for the minor characters. Originally Horatio and Polonius were supposed to have the same costume, but since that did not work with the blocking they had to be divided: the chorus member plays Horatio, who is forced by Hamlet to disguise himself as Polonius while still being Horatio/Chorus. Horatio's costume needed to be easy to put on backstage and easy to take off onstage. The Polonius costume needed to be easily put on by Zacher, on top of all the big chorus costume and considering her restricted vision. All these aspects amounted to an asymmetrical design silhouette for both. Horatio's costume needed a closure in the front. Polonius would wear a shawl-like throw to be placed on the 'exposed' right shoulder. For Polonius a black

garbage bag was used and decorated with aged burlap pieces. In order to help Zacher see the throw in the dark we taped dots of reflective tape onto the shoulder seam and weighted it so Preston could throw it towards her with the shoulder part first. The throwing of the shawl worked well since it supported Hamlet's cold and aggressive stance towards the chorus.



Image 4-8 left: Horatio, middle: Polonius, right: Claudius, base of costume

For Claudius we used a great long vest out of burgundy colored looped wool knit from the donation rack. We had played already with it in the rehearsal hall, but eventually had to take it and work on it. It had to be cut open to expand its size and the remainder draped with burgundy coat lining, a purple and black suit jacket. This strengthened the structure and decorated it at the same time. This costume, including the crown, was put on and taken off backstage, and with all its practical functions it looked as if it be would be an easy solution for a quick change.

The Dead Women were basically modeled after Ophelia's red sweater dress. Sepúlveda Navarrete used up the rest of the sweaters and draped them onto a bum roll attached to a covered canvas belt closed at the front. This had to be put on and taken off on stage so the skirts had to be straightforward for the dressers.



Image 4-9 left: skirts for Dead Women, right: Lab Coats, after treatments

For The Men in White Lab Coats in Part 5 it was important to match the volume to the size of the chorus costumes, which was easily done by adding more white fabric to the lab coats: a cotton/viscose skirt, a taffeta lining, some cotton gauze remnants, and then shredding it to pieces. It was important to keep the lab coats recognizable.

The objective for making the coat for Hamlet was to find a very sturdy, stiff and lightweight material. Burton suggested fiberglass but after some considerations this solution was rejected. Since there also was the donated foam we double-checked the available amount and decided to glue two layers of this thin high-density foam together. Before doing this we needed to test different glues and after several tests we settled on contact cement.

There was not a concrete idea for Hamlet's shirt yet, but we had worked on the wires and the rest of the structure underneath the shirt, since this construction would not affect the solution on top. We reused the canvas base, changed the opening to the front and padded the shoulders so we could attach the wires and assure comfort. McCartney bent and cramped the cables in loops, stitched them onto the shoulders and she also was able to finish Hamlet's glove for a trial at the workshop.

The objective for the fieldtrip to the UBC Power plant was to provide a possibility for the actors to experience a site like a hydro plant that would inspire their work and help them to understand their role and the movement on a deeper level. The plant represented not just conceptually but also physically the closest comparison to *Hamletmachine*. It was a chance to submerge in this completely mechanical world and experience physically the variety of unrelenting and ongoing sounds and noises, the heat, the steam and its condensations, unusual sights and tight places surrounded by a labyrinth of pipes in any size and length, countless levers, turning wheels, plugs and much more. After a tour through all four levels of the two halls the actors were able to engage on their own in a physical conversation with the environment and the crew gave us complete freedom to move through all the spaces.



Image 4-10 UBC Powerplant, left: Zacher & Churla, right: Canero

The work we had achieved before entering the second workshop was not as much as expected. Progress was still delayed by the participants' other commitments. This was felt especially in the costume shop. It was important to get the chorus costumes finished for the actors, but they took longer than expected and some changes were in order. The elongated spine for Zacher's costume was changed to the contorted look as it had been applied on Churla's costume, since it did serve the original idea for these costumes better.

4.2 The Second Workshop: Results and Changes

The second workshop was scheduled over a Saturday and Sunday on the Dorothy Somerset Studio Stage. The entire cast and crew were present, the production team, Professor Steven Taubeneck as well as some

invited audience from the student body. We went through the whole play from part to part, sometimes stop and go and sometimes repeating, re-evaluating. Although there was a plan for these two days, the schedule became very loose since unexpected events kept shifting the order around. The objective this time was manifold. First of all we wanted to assess the various light ideas that came out of the first workshop but had not been tested yet. Won-Kyoon was to experiment with atmospheric lighting. Another important goal was to add of some original music. The first music piece that was finished was the Electra monologue for Part 5 and we were also able to use the music for the first part, although still as a rough idea. Also for the first time we looked at the animations that had been finished and Cordell Whyne and Ron Serna checked in with us during the two days. Lai tried different black papers and fabrics for the set and we observed these would work as a screen surface for the animation. The dimensions of the set were finalized and this was the first chance to try it in the space. The final designs, the costume breakdown and the list for the lights in the costumes was presented (Appendices A, B, C).

The bodysuit for Ophelia was finished to be worn but was still without the blood and light business. Since all the interior layers were still unattached and caused too many problems during the dressing, we pulled it without seeing it on stage. There was also no light in the leg or the shoulder yet. We tried the real top but it was still without the outer self, meaning that the foam layer was the same as in the rehearsal top. The collar was made out of bubble foam and a sheet of a strong diffuser. Just as in the first workshop we placed the same three white one watt LED's in the top and the stronger LED touch light in the club arm.

The sweater dress had been finished and there was a rough blocking for Part 5 in place, so we could look at the exact timing of the Part including the wrapping on the actual wheelchair.

Hamlet's costume was almost in the same state as during the first workshop. Preston had a very functional rehearsal costume, closer to the real thing than anyone else in the cast so the priority was still on the other costumes. However, we tried the glove and Preston also wore the understructure for the shirt, this time with wires attached. The EL wires arrived a couple of days before the workshop, so we were able to attach them temporarily to the shirt. They had been custom-made and included a mode-change option with three possibilities. One was just on steady, the other pulsed in at ca. 80 BPM and the third one pulsed at ca. 120 BPM. We also used the same Christmas lights from the first workshop, but instead of taping them directly to the inside wall of the brain we experimented with different coloured batting and densities to diffuse the light.



**Image 4-11 workshop 2 (Courtesy Project Ophelia) , left: Hamlet & Ophelia,
right: Gertrud & Ophelia**

For the workshop Churla and Zacher were able to wear the full bodysuits, including the vests and hip belts with all the bones attached. Although the arm and leg covers had been worked on, they were not yet ready for the workshop. Squire was able to provide both skulls and Bement gave us two pairs of red LED's powered by a couple of AAA batteries for their eyes. We also were able to use the finished wings for Horatio as an angel and the now lighter umbrella, which worked with the two touch-button lights as it had previously.



Image 4-12 workshop 2, Chorus base costume with skulls

We were also able to rehearse for the first time with the skirts for the Dead Women, Horatio's cape and Polonius' shawl.

Gertrud was the focus in this workshop regarding the light for her skirt and the wall. We temporarily decorated a silver taffeta blanket with five chains of LED Christmas lights, three red ones and two with white bulbs. On the first day we hung it in front of the ladder, so Sekiya could stand on the box in front of it. She agreed to go up the ladder for the second day of the workshop and we hung the blanket from the grid behind her.

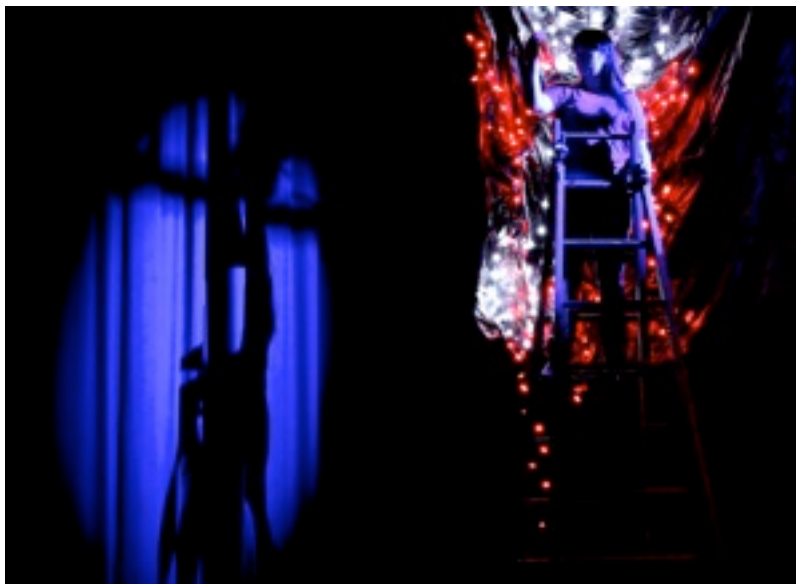


Image 4-13 workshop 2, Gertrud

There were many results from the workshop, but they raised more questions and challenges than solutions. Hamlet's brain, for example, was one of the many concerns at this point, four weeks before the show. From the beginning the brain was to have light that would create waves with motion sensors, lighting up different sides of the head as he moved it in different directions. It was a difficult idea to realize. After some trials with twelve LED bulbs arranged in a cross on top of the head, it became clear that this would not have enough impact. Considering the costs and labor that would go into this project we decided to drop it. There was no solution in sight.

We had to tie the cables of the shirt to his arm, because they were bouncing around too much. Also the plugs made quite a noise when they were dragged or thrown around on the floor, which was likely to happen. The cables on the glove were too long and we needed more of them. Although ideally the EL wire

embedded in the arm cables were supposed to pulsating at a heart rate, the available option was too fast, so the best choice was to turn them on and leave them like that throughout.

We had continuously removed the weight from the boots, since January, especially after Preston started to complain about problems with his knees. It was also necessary to make a decision about the boots, but since Preston got used to the rehearsal boots and they worked great because they were bulky and looked old and so became integrated into his costume.

The red lights in Gertrud's background did not work. Gertrud's colour was definitely not red, it made her too vibrant and alive. This realization inspired the idea to place one single red string of lights from her waist down towards the ground. It would be the only light during Part 5. This would tie her together with Ophelia's red sweater dress and support their connection with each other. The white lights, on the other hand, which looked more like blue, worked. They supported the concept of her cold, royal slowness and her static movements, giving her a more removed appearance. It also became clear that the bulbs needed a strong diffusion in order to get rid of the Christmas look. This posed a challenge, since the previous test showed that diffusing LED's, especially when on a chain, is very difficult.

The chorus trial resulted in interesting findings. The adjustment for Zacher and Churla from the rehearsal heads to the skulls was significant. The horse heads were open at the sides, so they learned to get their cues from their side vision; now they had to refocus through two relatively small holes in the front. Therefore it was a blessing in disguise that we could not provide the arm and leg covers, so both could fully concentrate on the skull movements. This readjustment also showed in their movements. Their walk became slower and more cautious; some movements became less precise and therefore lost strength, which needed to be addressed.

Other areas that needed more attention were: the minor characters; the waltz of Hamlet and Horatio as an angel in Part 3, with the umbrella and all their costume business; their walk and dealings with the skirts of the Dead Women and the movements of the Men in White Lab Coats.

Polonius' throw was too light and Zacher still had difficulties seeing it, so we added more reflective tape and more weights at the shoulder.

During the second workshop we did not conduct any trials of light sensitive paints since there was just no time to prepare a test.

There were not any new findings in regards to light in Ophelia's costume. The next test would come with the final workshop. There were some issues with the paper doll. The similar coloured areas blurred into each other and needed to be separated with black outlines. The white negative space did not work and needed to be painted black and so did the back of the doll.

There was also still the problem of the wheelchair. We had borrowed one for the photo shoot from Burton's prop shop. As suspected we were unfortunately not able to get Canero into it with the dress: the armrests and back were just too high and could not be removed. The metal straps extending from her waist could not bend upwards nor would that be a desired look. Since we were not able to use the wheelchair from the props department, our production manager Amelie Schumacher had to give all her attention now to contacting the wheelchair basketball team in hopes they would lend us a chair, which they generously did.

In the end the workshop showed that the process had just barely started. In regards to the light the chorus would not have the same effect as in the first workshop. The stage during the workshop was brightly and colourfully lit most of the time and of course the black light did not work in these circumstances. (see Image 4-12)

4.3 Building and Moving the Machine: Towards the Workshop Shows

Hamlet's shirt, pants and coat were the main focus after the second workshop. The top of the shirt was made from fine grade burlap, which had been distressed and aged and then stitched onto an aged t-shirt. This time the shirt worked well in contrasting the strap structure on top. All the layers were joined together, including the canvas layer and the straps on top. This way it would be easy for Preston to open the clips of the straps and then he would be able to remove all three layers of the shirt at once, opening the snaps that would hold it in place. A custom-dyed cotton elastic held the cables tight to his arm and it was positioned at his wrist and upper arm.

The shorts were constructed from repurposed socks. The grey, black and blue socks were draped as a patchwork piece into a pant shape. After a fitting they just needed to be adjusted, hand stitched in place. The shorts in combination with a white fine-rip undershirt would finish Preston's costume for Part 4, when 'The Actor playing Hamlet' would disassemble himself through the costume.



Image 4-14 Hamlet, left: finished burlap shirt, right: finished shorts

The most exciting and anxious part of Hamlet's costume, besides the brain, was the coat. The rehearsal costume was working fine and since time became an issue I just redrew a very simple design for the coat based on the existing structure. McCartney disassembled the rehearsal costume down to the plastic straps and McGhie rebuilt it from there. The foam idea still did not seem the best solution but after the first layer was on the structure it became clear that this would work. In collaboration with McGhie we worked the design to a simpler shape and added some decorative details like the clasps, the grommets and the shiny shoulder pieces.



Image 4-15 Hamlet, finished Coat

Shortly before the workshop shows Bement came with exciting news. He had built a three-color LED plate that was powered by two AAA batteries and the colors could be modulated from green to blue to yellow. We were able to attach it to the top of the helmet structure in the brain and a light layer of white batting around the inner site of the plastic shell served as a great diffuser.

During one of the workshop shows Hamlet's brain went dark shortly after Hamlet entered the stage. The light source needed to be more firmly reattached, and the torn cable needed re-soldering. The cables of Hamlet's shirts made just too much noise, and the removal of almost all of the plugs from the cables and the shortening of some others that were dragging on the floor reduced the sound to an agreeable level.

After the workshop we also got into gear for Gertrud's costume. First we took care of her headpiece. The second workshop had showed that she would need more presence, adding more height to her head would solve this. An inner structure made from a piece of foam on a polyester fleece cap provided the height and allowed enough base for the decoration as well. The decoration was not supposed to look like a specific plant, but was just slightly reminiscent of an Aloe Vera. We spray-painted it with a sheer silver sparkle and added some rhinestones for their strong reflective properties.



Image 4-16 Gertrud, head piece, left: fitting, right: finished

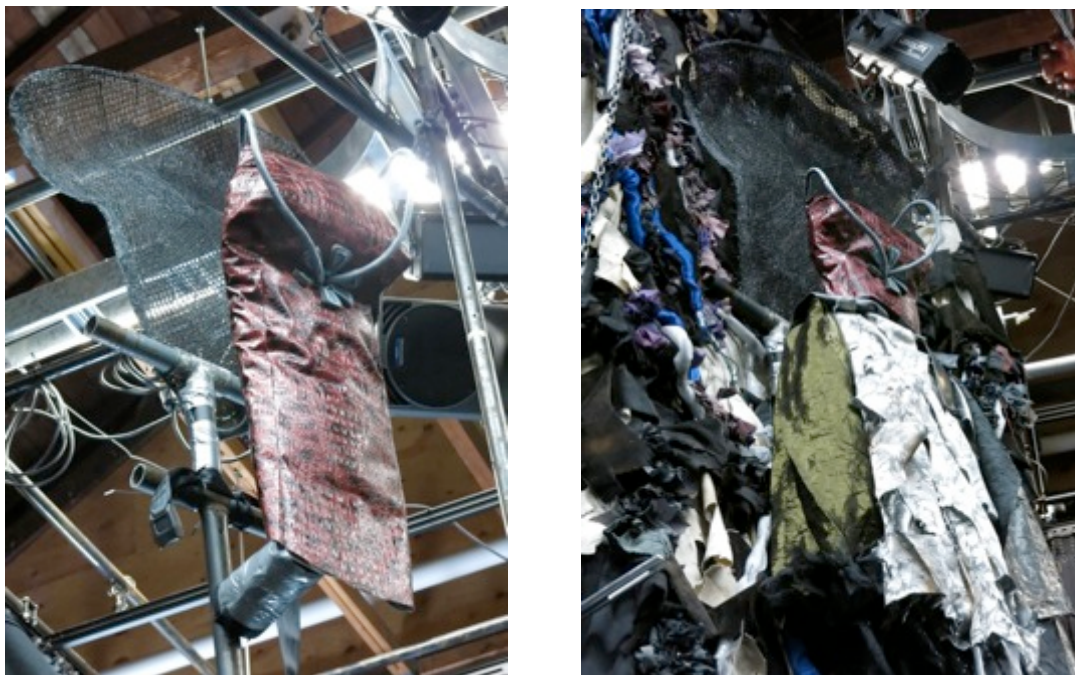


Image 4-17 Gertrud's structure, left: with collar & chest piece, right: finished

It was also time to start making the dress for Gertrud. She had to be able to get on and off the structure from the side, which posed many challenges. Instead of making a dress she would wear I transposed the elaborate dress onto the structure itself. It was best to divide the dress into three parts. The first was the chest piece. At its base was a simple canvas slip-on version that would go over the wooden board and close

underneath the seating rod. The canvas was covered with several layers of batting and a padded bra. The final visible layer was a burgundy and black coloured bonded textile out of vinylal with a snake texture and a high gloss. The second part of the dress was the collar, which shrunk from a body surrounding piece to one that just came up from the back of the backrest. The last part of the dress would be the skirt extending onto the sides of the structure and upwards behind her. This part of the dress we could make when the structure was installed on the performance stage.

Burks, Smith and Lai worked first on the structure when we were able to get into the space. Finally we were able to decorate the structure with the dress. We used an old canvas curtain lining and black melton from the stock as a base and placed on top of it two blue LED strings, three of the whites from stock and a red one. The white chains were covered with four layers of blue polyester organza, the blue and red ones were covered with thin milky foam sheets in order to try and diffuse the concentration of LED dots. A skirt made out of four skirts from the donation rack was attached at the waist of the chest piece and finished Gertud's structural look.



Image 4-18 Gertrud, left: dress rehearsal, right: workshop show (Courtesy Nancii Bernard)

Nicole still required another costume piece that would cover her and, since its most important function was comfort, Fukumoto made a dress out of black panne velvet and for her hands we chose a grey pair of gloves with a small cuff.

For the chorus the focus was on the arm and leg covers. Patterns had to be made and fitted, and two layers of foam joined together for the pieces. There was the question of how to close them and we needed a treatment to establish the look of blood vessels. Experiments with different foams and different colored papers in various strengths eventually showed that the most suitable would be black foam with the a porous surface and a strong white tissue paper. For the closures we decided on a double row of Velcro tape and elastic along the arch of the foot to hold the leg covers in place. The costume was finished off with a pair of skeleton gloves from the dollar store that continued the movement of the paper lines.

The minor characters were almost finished. The last task was to paint some glow in the dark paint on them, which worked better when applied in higher concentration. The colours applied were different shades of grey, an off white and some of a high-concentration, black light textile paint. It was painted onto Horatio's cape, on the burlap of Polonius' shawl and on Claudius vest.

The lab coats needed a paint treatment underlining their original features as well as their raggedness. During the first dress rehearsal it became clear that the blood vessel idea on the arm and leg covers was not working yet, it looked too flat and soft. By emphasizing the raised areas through the application of black latex paint, it looked stronger and more defined. The shading in the skulls resulted in a great three-dimensional modeling, a treatment that because of time constraints was not added to the bones of the costumes. The different whites in the fabrics of the bones showed up in the black light, but the effect was not as strong as in the previous workshops.

The final chorus took on a more cartoonish look that allowed us to place them as far away from naturalism look as possible and try their potential as clowns, as carriers of tragic humor.



Image 4-19 workshop show, Chorus and Chorus as Horatio with Hamlet, Part 1



Image 4-20 workshop show, Chorus as Claudius

The end of Part 3, when the Chorus was contorted into an angel with a face of Horatio on its back became visually accumulative. This accumulation was at its height at the time of the waltz. The mass of costume was almost tangible and the dancing became very heavy because of the costume mass both actors wore and their fast movements.



Image 4-21 Hamlet & Chorus as Horatio/Angel, Part 3 (Courtesy Nancii Bernard)

Part 4 was the part when the structure of the play itself is exposed. In a way it repeats Part 1, where the structure of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a play and Hamlet as an actor is revealed. It was, therefore, important to reveal the theatre itself, turning on the fluorescent lights, removing the masks of the actors playing the chorus, so everybody could see their faces, exposing them to the audience and forcing them into the same level of reality. (see Image 4-20) It is on the level that a revolution can happen. It was supposed to be closer to a literal reality than all the other parts and, like a revolution, disrupt the flow of the play established by its visual (and audible) style.

The costume for 'The Actor playing Hamlet' fell into place and developed a natural progression. Churla stayed seated where she was, her head was already exposed and the dressers just needed to come and place Hamlet's brain on her head. This gesture made her now 'The Actor playing Hamlet' and it was a strong indicator of the theatre structure and the power it has over action and actor. It comes from backstage and is imposed; however, it is not in control of how the text is presented, this is in the hands of the actor. This

scene communicated visually a great intersection of the past, the present, which is disobedience towards the text, and the future.



Image 4-22 workshop show, Chorus & Hamlet, Part 4



Image 4-23 workshop show, Chorus as 'The Actor playing Hamlet' Part 4 (Courtesy Nancii Bernard)

We changed the walk in the costumes for ‘The Men in White Lab Coats’. This process took awhile and after several trials we settled on a wide stance and a rhythmic and machine-like walk, left leg and arm then right leg and arm and so on. This walk made the heavily tattered costumes sway which gave them an eerie and removed appearance, contrasting their previously more organic moving appearances. Despite many experiments and trials we were not able to get the wrapping of Ophelia into this rhythm. The main reason was a lack of visibility. Zacher and Churla were not able to see the gauze roll and each other at the same time.



Image 4-24 workshop show, Chorus as The Men in White Lab Coats, Part 5
(Courtesy Nancii Bernard)

After the second workshop the remainder of Ophelia’s bodysuit came together rapidly. For the final layer of her top we used the same foam with the slight shine as used for Hamlet’s coat. This would tie in with the idea of external authority she would fight against. A different way of trying to diffuse the LED’s was to line the entire top with a highly reflective silver paper. The LED’s would shine towards the reflective instead of directly onto Canero’s face, but trials quickly confirmed that this would not be bright enough. This loss could also not be compensated by adjusting the light levels higher. Instead, placing cones around the single bulbs helped to balance the light between looking like a point and looking like an area. Placing additional

silver tinsel around the lights resulted in an interesting pattern, although it was difficult to adjust and not very noticeable on stage.



**Image 4-25 Ophelia, left & middle: fitting complete bodysuit,
right: rehearsal with sweater dress skirt**

The red sweater dress required a focused rehearsal to make sure Churla and Zacher would grab the skirt at the right place. All three of them would need to walk slowly yet statically backwards in order to assure they would land at the proper spot in front of the wheelchair. The skirt had to be thrown by the chorus onto the ramp, which would also throw Canero into the seat of the chair. It was a sensitive matter. This reverse sense of violation added a very lively aspect to the otherwise heavy and almost static move of the dress.

One of the sweaters in the big dress had small thin silver coins attached to its collar. By accident the sweater was placed at the hem of the skirt so the coins dragged on the floor and made very high-pitched chiming sounds when Canero walked. It added to the ritualistic and eerie nature of the last part.



Image 4-26 workshop show, *Ophelia and Chorus*, Part 4 (Courtesy Nancii Bernard)

The last workshop started and ended with calmness, uncharacteristic for the last days of a production. There seemed nothing to do anymore, yet nothing was finished either. It was like being on top of a wave and one can just ride it out and hope it will not crash. Then again, a crash is always part of the process and marks just another step in learning more about the beauty of theatre making.



Image 4-27 workshop show: *Ophelia* "dressed as a whore" (Courtesy Nancii Bernard)

Part 5: Workshop Results and Conclusion “They freeze under the Umbrella, embracing. The breast cancer radiates like a sun.”

“It is better to have millions of little walls than one or two big ones”

Heiner Mueller, 1982

This UBC production of *Hamletmachine* focused on the process. The challenges for this production evolved from the material aspects and the process of bringing it to the stage.

The workshops demonstrated the challenge of positioning the light sources, finding suitable light levels and dealing with the interference of natural light seeping over and under the backdrop, which made any work in the complete dark impossible.

The LED lights proved to be difficult to diffuse, which was not a problem in Hamlet’s costume but in the other two lead costumes. Gertrud’s light chains were a diffusion problem on a large scale and challenging to manage, but the light in Ophelia’s costumes was also difficult to disperse. Several experiments to diffuse the late additions of red and white LED’s into the skirt of Ophelia’s sweater dress were unsuccessful. The three white LED’s blended into the audience when Sarah bent over at a certain angle, while the multiple red cluster LED’s were diffused to a manageable level through their color coating. The storage of the clock/bomb in Ophelia’s top resulted in a move of the LED bulb, which impacted the angle of the light on her face. Instead of using three LED bulbs in this case an LED sheet might work better in the future.

At the end Ophelia’s costumes looked and functioned as envisioned. The full body suit was fully functional with just a few technical imperfections. The costume was lightweight and according to Canero comfortable to wear, although the hem of the leg created weight on the top of her foot and caused some problems during the run. As a one-piece-suit with a complex internal construction Sarah needed the help of two dressers to get in and out of the costume. The leg openings on her proper right arm and leg caved in significantly when closed and the zipper colours and lengths differed.

The visualization of Ophelia’s metamorphosis throughout the play had two gaps, one between Part 2 and 3 and the other from Part 3 to Part 5. When she left at the end of Part 2 and reappears in Part 3 “dressed as a whore” the decision was to either close her wounds again or leave them open. The choice was to leave them partially open, so the blood would be visible but not the light. In hindsight the open wounds could have

been a great reminder of the constant pain, even when she dances and smiles. This would have made also a better case for her transition into Part 5.

Hamlet's costume represents the potential and the challenges faced in this production. The costume required new solutions, adjustments and changes from the preliminary design phase well into the tech rehearsals. By tech rehearsal, the costume still needed attention, either by searching out a stronger neck brace in the last minute, widening the speech hole, tightening the elastics for his cable arm or fixing the light in the brain, which went dark at the beginning of the final dress rehearsal. Catering to Hamlet's costume reminded one of the spoiled prince originally envisioned. The lights in his costume worked well otherwise and looked intriguing, but the question remains whether additional El wires on his arms and additional spotlights on his armor shining downwards would illuminate him better and reduce the light levels needed around him.

From a conceptual point, Hamlet who is dragging his "overweight brain like a hunchback" could require more attention in the future. The light in the brain was alluding to its activity yet it would be interesting to resize the brain so the actor maybe has to drag the brain literally as a means of restriction.

Hamlet's costume for Part 4 was effective. His white undershirt clearly identified him as a private person, while the shorts of the "Actor playing Hamlet" clearly belonged to Hamlet's costume. This juxtaposition during his Part 4 speech visually placed him between the two worlds he addresses. His transition of quitting the play in the nude was pulled from the show by the department at the last minute. The nudity was integral for two reasons. First it alludes to his exit, because he quit the play, the system, and leaves everything behind him. The other reason was to see him as human being, representing him as the 'machine' he is by nature and the 'machine' he wanted to be.

Hamlet's costume ended up not being as boyish and clumsy as originally conceived. In fact he looked quite more handsome and Preston's interpretation of Hamlet was very strong and forceful. Rather than work against Preston's tall and straight stature and interpretation, so we just followed the given circumstances.

Gertrud was a figure that was undoubtedly a presence in the play, but also the most underdeveloped costume of the set. The main reasons were the late installation and the unknown issues surrounding it. The size of this costume and the lack of communication was an issue for this process. However, this was the only way of realizing this figure in the circumstances and it was great to observe its potential on stage.

The almost whimsical nature of the chorus made them different from the other figures. It would be interesting to see the difference in development with the application of Oskar Schlemmer's fourth design principle. They might have fit in easier with the others, but it was a deliberate choice to design them as humans and interestingly they became more like puppets, alluding to the concept of man as a mechanism.

Their build took much longer than expected, which was detrimental for the movement trials and resulted in some unexplored potential of these costumes.

The accumulation of materials in the costumes connected directly to the density, the layering and the brutality of the text (Appendix D). The accumulation of material and how it creates meaning is in all costumes to different degrees. One of the most literal was the costume for "Ophelia dressed as a whore". One of the more obscure was the costume for Gertrud "growing from that wall". An audience member said Gertrud's chest piece reminded her of an elderly ladies handbag. This observation may reflect status, but certainly an age, which had not been indicated through other more realistic methods.

Imposing restrictions onto the actor's body caused difficulties for the actors throughout the process. The long rehearsal hours over a long period of time, bodies that were not warmed up enough and previous injuries were contributing factors to complaints of physical discomfort and sometimes pain. These problems were the most worrisome companions throughout the rehearsal process. During the tech weekend it became so acute that a meeting was called to address the question of canceling the performances.

Despite all the restrictions within the play the project offered great freedom for the creative team and the actors. The project's success was due to the contribution and willingness to work in an unusual, certainly unknown and often uncomfortable discipline. This discomfort is inherent in Mueller's plays and expresses itself usually through a private journey. The underlying theme in *Hamletmachine* of provocation and the call to revolt was certainly a constant companion in the creation of this production. In the end Project Ophelia broke with theatre conventions but at the same time became stuck in theatre structure. While limited resources, time and/or interest challenged this demanding and potentially expensive production, the project reached as far as it could, probably even further than some expected.

During the last days of writing this thesis report a statement from fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto came to my attention. He recalls a design request from Mueller for a production of *Tristan and Isolde* in 1993. Yamamoto states that it was very important for Mueller to break "with the conventions of the singers" and he asked Yamamoto "to make costumes that would impede on the movement they are used to." (Suschke

205). My aim for this thesis project was to explore the impact of the costume on the performer, the ways costume influences the actors' awareness of their bodies, and how costumes can create character and their own exclusive space so that the costumed body becomes the main visual communicator of the script. I believe our production of *Hamletmachine* successfully accomplished these goals, and also that Mueller himself might have approved of our explorations, so the journey continues.

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Appendix A – Final Costume Design Renderings









HAMLET MACHINE

Hamlet - Nick Preston

part VI

part III-IV

part I - III







Appendix B - Costume Breakdown

PART 1	FAMILY SCRAPBOOK
Notes (script) Notes:	At the shore, ruins, funeral procession, Gertrud growing through the wall PR- proper right, PL- Proper left
FIGURES	COSTUME PIECES
Ophelia Sarah Canero	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bodysuit, light grey, with extensions PR arm and PR leg, zipper in CB, close fit collar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arm and leg have zipper openings, content: 'blood' fabric and electronics 2) Top, black coated foam, asymmetrical, clip closure at PR side <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opening in front/side seam, content 'heart' and electronics (see light list) - PRESET heart/clock/ bomb (props) 3) Club arm, black foam with electronics (see light list) 4) Glove, PL, red, wool decoration worn underneath club arm 5) Sports protectors, black PR arm, PL leg 6) Pair of ankle bootlets, black low heel, lace closure 7) Hairpiece, black/burgundy, clip 8) Underwear: comfortable, black socks (private)
HAMLET Nick Preston	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Shorts, grey and blues/black, made from socks, elastic in waist 2) Undershirt, white, fine rip 3) Burlap Shirt, brown, aged, 3 layers in one <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - top layer strap structure/bondage, 4x clips, closure CF - burlap layer connected with T-shirt, black/grey cables attached, snaps CF, electronics (see light list) - cable arm PL attached with elastic, upper arm and wrist 4) Brain, clear plastic with electronics (props) (see light list) 5) Coat/Armor, black coated foam, tube shape, extend beyond head, eye slit, mouth hole <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detachable front piece, Velcro closures at side from CF, 2 at each side - Velcro closures at the side seams, 2 at each side 6) Glove, black/silver PR with black and grey cables 7) Pair of gum boots, black/aged 8) Underwear: white underpants (private), no socks

<p>GERTRUD Nicole Sekiya</p>	<p>1) Dress, short with long sleeves, black panne velvet, zipper in CB 2) Headpiece silver/red, added height, with black sparkling aloe vera on top, off centre <u>Part of the Structure:</u> 4) Chest piece, burgundy/black fake snake vinyl, 2 grey tube loops at the upper side - 2-D skirt attached, silver, burgundy, black, green, aged - slip on wooden board, Velcro closure under seating rod, electronics (see light list) 5) Collar, black plastic net, roughly shell shape, stiff, placed onto CB rod with zip straps 6) Pair of gloves, light grey, small cuff 7) Underwear: leggings black</p>
<p>CHORUS Natasha Zacher Morgan Churla</p> <p>Basic costume</p> <p>as Horatio Natasha Zacher</p> <p>as Polonius Natasha Zacher</p>	<p>1) Full body leotard with full head mask, feet & hand attached, black, zipper CB - some 3-D vertebra and pelvis bones tucked onto front, white 2) Vest, black, short, tight fitted, with vertebra bones in front, zipper CB - shoulder and arm bones attached, elastic + clips, upper arm and lower arm 3) Wide waist belt, black, with batting attached, left and right hips, eyes/hook closure CB - leg bones attached, close on upper leg and/or ankle with elastic + clips 4) Pair of leg and arm covers black foam with white paper decoration, Velcro at the back 5) Pair of gloves, black with white hand skeleton print 6) Skull mask, with electronics (see light list) 7) Jazz shoes and socks, black (private) 8) sports bra and string panties (private)</p> <p>1) Cloak, light, medium and dark brown, work over the PL shoulder, snap closure at front</p> <p>1) Shawl, black, plastic with burlap patches - ADDED ON STAGE by Zacher as Chorus/Horatio (worn on PR shoulder)- needs preset</p>

	PART 2 THE EUROPE OF WOMEN	PART 3 SCHERZO
Notes (script)	enourmous room, furniture fire, clock	University of the Dead
FIGURES	COSTUME PIECES	COSTUME PIECES
Ophelia	same as Part 1 REMOVAL of clubarm on stage Sc. 2 REMOVAL of heart/clock/bomb from body suit top on stage Sc. 3	same as Part 2 CLOSE arm and leg flaps half way - before entrance
Hamlet	same as Part 1	same as Part 1 REMOVAL of Coat/Armor by Dead Women - on stage
Gertrude	same as Part 1	same as Part 1
Chorus Basic costume as Dead Women Zacher & Churla as Claudius Churla as Horatio as Angel Zacher	same as Part 1 LOOSE Horatio and Polonius before Part 2 n/a n/a n/a	same as Part 1 1) 2 skirts, red sweaters, front open, tie straps at the front - ADD ON by dressers before Part 3 on stage 1) Vest, overlength, burgundy/purple, open front - ADD crown (props) - QUICK CHANGE into the costume 1) pair of wings, black (props) worn backwards 2) mask, human face, vivid colours - placed on the back of the skull - REPLACE the skull backwards on Zachers head

	PART 4 PEST IN BUDA/ BATTLE FOR GREENLAND	PART 5 FIERCLY ENDURING MILLENIUMS IN FEARFUL ARMOR
Notes	Ophelia's room, armor, Hamlet takes of make up & costume	Deep sea, Ophelia in a wheel chair, wrapped in cotton gauze by Men in White Lab Coats
FIGURES	COSTUME PIECES	COSTUME PIECES
Ophelia	n/a	Sweater dress, red, woolish (6 items): 1) Top with red embroidery 2) Miniskirt, corduroy, zipper at side 3) 'Cage' corset, clip closure CF - use sleeves of red glitter knit to tie in CF 4) Bum roll, tie in CF 5) Skirt, clip closure in CF 6) Glove, long, velvet with blood deco. 7) Bicycle shorts
Hamlet	same as Part 3 REMOVES glove REMOVES leg armor REMOVES brain REMOVES neck brace REMOVES shirt REMOVES under shirt REMOVES shorts	n/a
Gertrude	same as Part 1	same as Part 1
Chorus		
Basic costume	same as Part 1	same as Part 1
as Actor playing Hamlet Churla	LOOSE Skull ADD Hamlet's brain	n/a
as Men in White Lab Coats Churla and Zacher	n/a	1) Lab coats. white, long rags added aged QUICK CHANGE for Churla

Appendix C – List of Lights in the Costumes

LIGHT LIST			
FIGURES	COSTUME PIECE	LIGHT SOURCE	POWER SOURCE
Ophelia	1) Body suit, arm (PR) and leg (PR)	3 x red LED bulbs 3 in arm, 4 in the leg	4 x AA batteries 2 in each
	2) Top placed in the collar	3 x white LED bulbs	1 x custom battery pack
	3) Club arm, into peak, ceiling	1 x touchlight, self- adhesive	3 x AA batteries
	4) Cage (sweater dress) onto lining of hoodie	3 x white LED bulbs	1 x custom battery pack
	5) Skirt (sweater dress)	3 x white LED bulbs 5 x red LED bulbs	1 x custom battery pack 2 x AAA batteries
Hamlet	1) Shirt from jacket pocket along both arms	4 x EL wires 2 x blue, 2 x red one colour on each arm	2 x AA batteries
	2) Brain placed on top of helmet	1 x yellow, 1 x green 1 x blue, all on a plate	1 x custom battery pack
Gertrud	1) Chest piece along the neckline	3 x white LED bulbs	1 x custom battery pack
	2) on her structure	2 x white LED chain 2 x blue LED chain 1 x red LED chain	AC plug in AC plug in AC plug in
Chorus basic costume	1) skulls	2 x 2 red LED bulbs 2 for each skull	2 x 2 AA batteries 2 for each skull

Appendix D - Photographs of the Workshop Performances

Courtesy of Nancii Bernard



























