

Dramatic forms are recognisable types of drama developed, performed or staged for specific mediums. Practitioners may use these forms individually or in combination. This document outlines just some of the many dramatic forms, with guiding questions for us to consider as practitioners when we engage with dramatic forms.

Theatre forms**Audio forms****Video forms****Production and
design forms**

As dramatic practitioners, we can consider audience, intention and possibilities when working with dramatic forms.

**Audience**

How does the dramatic form we choose shape the relationship between our work and our audience?

**Intention**

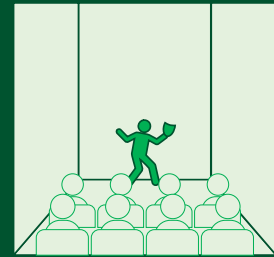
How do our choices about dramatic forms serve the dramatic meaning and creative intent of our work?

**Possibilities**

How might understanding dramatic forms extend and enhance our creative choices as dramatic practitioners?

Dramatic forms | Indoor theatre forms

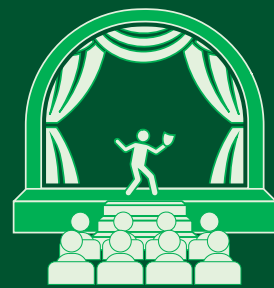
Theatre forms are live dramatic works and experiences that use the physical environment and/or social contexts to shape dramatic meaning and the actor-audience relationship, such as indoor theatre forms, outdoor theatre forms and applied theatre forms. Indoor theatre forms are staged in purpose-built or adapted interior spaces in which performers and audiences share a defined spatial relationship. The configuration of the stage and audience area fundamentally shapes what kinds of work can be made and how audiences experience it.



Black box

Works staged in a flexible, bare, and often small, interior theatre space with no fixed stage or seating. The space can be adapted to a range of configurations. Performers may remain on stage for the duration of the performance, or entrances and exits may occur through the audience.

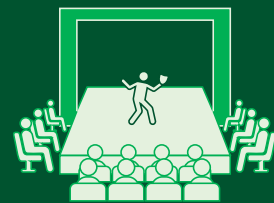
- How might the flexibility of the black box allow us to enact distinct stylistic conventions or experiment across multiple styles in the same space?
- When devising, how could our choice of configuration shape the actor-audience relationship?
- How might we use the neutral space of the black box to realise a set design concept that clearly defines the audience's relationship with the space?



Proscenium arch

Works performed on a stage framed by an arch which separates performers from the audience. Often, proscenium arch theatres have tiered seating. Performers typically enter and exit through the wings on either side of the stage.

- How might the proscenium arch support representational acting styles, where the fourth wall, belief and suspension of disbelief are central to the dramatic experience?
- How could the defined sightlines and framed staging of the proscenium help us realise a directorial concept that depends on set design, blocking, proxemics, transitions and stage space?



Thrust stage

Works performed on a stage which projects outwards and is surrounded by the audience on 3 sides, with a backing wall upstage. Performers may enter and exit through the wings on either side of the back of the stage.

- How might the thrust stage allow us to move between presentational and representational acting styles within the same work, using the 3-sided audience configuration to support creative choices?
- When devising, how could the thrust stage shape our ensemble's relationship with the audience, making proxemics and spatial awareness central to the performance?



Theatre in the round

Works staged in a performance space in the centre with audience surrounding it on all sides. There is no fixed front or back wall. Performers may remain on stage for the duration of the performance, or entrances and exits may occur through the audience, as there is no fixed backstage or wings.

- How might performing in the round encourage presentational acting conventions?
- When staging and analysing works, how might the in the round configuration create a sense of complicity or shared experience between performers and audience?
- How might the limitations for entrances and exits impact our design ideas?



Traverse stage

Works performed on a corridor running between 2 sections of audience on either side, facing each other across the stage. Performers may enter or exit at either end of the stage corridor or remain on stage for the duration of the performance.

- When rehearsing or devising works, how could we use the corridor configuration to shape a sense of journey or movement through space or time in our work?
- How might dramatic meaning be affected by allowing the audience to see both the performance and each other's responses simultaneously and how could we use this intentionally?

Dramatic forms | Outdoor theatre forms

Theatre forms are live dramatic works and experiences that use the physical environment and/or social contexts to shape dramatic meaning and the actor-audience relationship, such as indoor theatre forms, outdoor theatre forms and applied theatre forms. Outdoor theatre forms are staged in exterior spaces which are either purpose built or adapted. These theatre forms expose practitioners and audiences to the natural environment and exploit the spatial, audio and social qualities of the location.



Amphitheatre

Works staged in an open-air performance space with a central stage area surrounded by tiered seating which is typically semicircular and uses natural acoustics.

- How might the amphitheatre's inherited conventions of Ancient Greek theatre shape our stylistic choices and what heightened or stylised forms might this space best support?
- How could the scale and communal quality of an amphitheatre shape the relationship between performer and audience in ways a proscenium arch cannot?
- How might the natural acoustics and landscape of an open-air amphitheatre inform our choices about voice, movement and design?



Festival theatre

Works staged in temporary structures built for specific festivals or seasons, including outdoor stages or festival pavilions/tents.

- How might a temporary performance structure shape our stylistic choices and what dramatic works might best suit a space that is not designed as a permanent theatre?
- How might festival staging connect to social and cultural contexts, embedding our work in community celebration or public life?



Street theatre

Works staged in public spaces without a defined stage or formal seating. Audiences gather spontaneously or encounter the work unexpectedly.

- How might street theatre serve social, cultural or community purposes and how could we use the public context as part of the dramatic meaning?
- How could a devised work respond to the unpredictability of a public space and what role might direct address, gaze and participation play in the dramatic meaning?



Environmental theatre

Works created in and inseparable from a natural landscape, such as the bush, beach or river where landscape is integral to the dramatic experience.

- How might the natural environment function to support dramatic meaning and what artistic and cultural contexts might this connect to?
- How might working in a natural landscape inform and shape our understanding of what constitutes a performance space and a dramatic convention?
- How could we engage with environmental theatre in ways that respect Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander relationships to Country, Community values and storytelling?

Dramatic forms | Applied theatre forms

Theatre forms are live dramatic works and experiences that use the physical environment and/or social contexts to shape dramatic meaning and the actor-audience relationship, such as indoor theatre forms, outdoor theatre forms and applied theatre forms. Applied theatre forms use theatre to develop social or educational goals, such as theatre in education, playback theatre and forum theatre. They are shaped by their purpose and relationship with the audience.



Theatre in education

Works staged for educational settings, often involving audience participation and targeted learning, social or wellbeing outcomes.

- How might we craft a dramatic work for specific learning, social or wellbeing outcomes and how will this inform our choices as practitioners?
- What conventions of the form could we draw on to create a dramatic work that engages our audience to think critically about ideas?
- How might we include audience participation so that the audience becomes an active part of our dramatic work?



Playback theatre

Works staged for social purpose involving audience members sharing personal stories which are immediately performed back to them by practitioners.

- What role does consent play when transforming personal stories into theatrical experiences and how might we establish protocols for gaining, giving and denying consent?
- How could playback theatre authentically represent the identities, values and perspectives within a community and what cultural safety protocols will we need to establish?



Forum theatre

Works staged for social, cultural and/or political action. A scene depicting oppression or injustice is performed, then replayed with the involvement of audience members (spect-actors) who are invited to stop the action and intervene by making alternative choices in an attempt to change the outcome of the scene.

- How might we structure a forum theatre work so that the audience (spect-actors) can meaningfully intervene?
- How could forum theatre make identities, values and perspectives visible, and what social or cultural forces might our work invite an audience to challenge, manipulate and reshape through dramatic action?

Dramatic forms | Audio forms

Audio forms are live or recorded dramatic works and experiences that use sound to shape dramatic meaning and audience engagement, such as sound design, radio plays, podcasts and soundscapes. Image is replaced or supplemented by sound as a carrier of meaning. The listener constructs the dramatic world imaginatively through voice, dialogue, sound effects, music and silence.



Sound design

The design and integration of all sound elements in a live production, such as amplification, effects, pre-recorded material, voiceover, live music and/or atmospheric sound.

- How might our approach to sound design include audio elements which serve the style, ideas and images of our work?
- How could our sound design reflect and reinforce the conventions of a specific style or practitioner approach?
- How might we use sound to shape the audience's engagement with and experience of a work?



Radio plays

Scripted or improvised dramatic form that is an audio recording of a production, using voice and sound design to engage audiences in a dramatic journey. Radio plays can also take the form of podcasts.

- How might working without visual elements change our approach to applying the elements of performance and embodying characters or roles?
- How might we shape the dramatic journey through sound alone and what storytelling conventions are specific to this form?



Live foley

Sound created live in performance, often visibly, by performers or sound artists generating effects and textures in real time.

- How could we use visible, live sound-making to create or challenge a sense of audience belief in a dramatic work?
- How might integrating live sound creation into our ensemble devising process draw on practitioner conventions and/or enhance dramatic meaning?



Soundscape

Composed or improvised arrangement of diegetic and/or non-diegetic sounds, often made with voice and body percussion, to create atmosphere, which may suggest an environment and/or shape audience engagement. Diegetic sound occurs within the dramatic action and non-diegetic sound is added outside the dramatic action.

- How might we develop soundscapes collaboratively, with sound and physical movement devised together rather than separately?
- How could our creation of diegetic and/or non-diegetic sounds create or challenge audience belief and what atmosphere are we trying to create?

Dramatic forms | Video forms

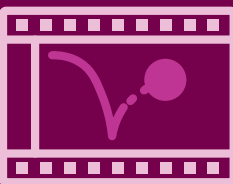
Video forms are dramatic works and experiences that use recorded image and sound to shape dramatic meaning and audience engagement, such as short film, animation and other media platforms and technologies. The practitioner works with planning documentation, camera, editing, mise en scène and screen narrative to create visual dramatic experiences.



Short film

Scripted or devised dramatic work for screen using film conventions: shot selection, directing, acting for camera, editing and sound design.

- How might acting for the camera differ from acting for a live audience? What representational acting conventions might we need to adapt for a screen context?
- How might we develop strong processes for pre-production, production and post-production to shape dramatic meaning and audience engagement?
- How might we incorporate the elements of drama to shape the dramatic journey for a screen audience?



Animation

A video form in which characters and environments are created through drawn, digital or stop-motion techniques rather than live-action filming.

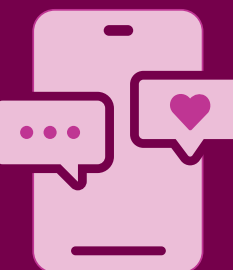
- How might animation allow us to realise a creative vision that live-action filming cannot and what visual and narrative conventions are specific to this form?
- How might animation be used to give form to cultural narratives and perspectives, and what responsibilities and protocols come with representing specific cultural ideas through this medium?



Hybrid forms

Live performance combined with recorded or live-streamed video projected as part of the theatrical event.

- How might combining live performance with screen action create new theatrical experiences and possibilities?
- What might it mean for audiences to watch live performance and its screen representation simultaneously?
- How might we articulate and enact a directorial vision that deliberately blends live performance and filmed footage to shape audience engagement and dramatic meaning?



Digital platforms

Dramatic works which incorporate, or are made for, digital platforms including social media, virtual and augmented reality.

- How could we use aspects of digital platforms, such as their interfaces, interactivity, and online communities, in combination with other dramatic forms?
- How might the participatory conventions of digital platforms enable audience involvement and what might this look like in a theatrical context?

Dramatic forms | Production and design forms

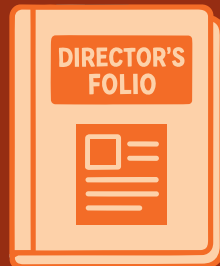
Production and design forms relate to the range of documents, plans and designed elements that contribute to the development and realisation of a dramatic production. They include scripts, directorial concepts, storyboards, designs, set models, costume sketches, set or lighting plans, cue sheets and production schedules.



Scriptwriting

The practice of writing dramatic works for performance, including play scripts, screenplays, stage directions, dialogue and monologue.

- How might the choices we make as a scriptwriter (such as form, structure, language, style and dramatic conventions) reflect our artistic, cultural and personal context, as well as our values, identity and perspective?
- How could we use dramatic language to shape character relationships, journeys and symbols in ways that are specific to the style we are writing for?
- How might we consider the importance of permissions, cultural ownership, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and respectful representation when creating scripted works?



Director's folio

A production document articulating a director's interpretive vision for a dramatic work, including analysis and research of the work, descriptions and explanations of key theatrical moments, justification of design concepts, rehearsal strategies, explanation of intended audience experience and reflections on processes.

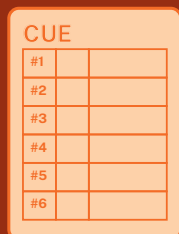
- How might we develop a directorial concept that serves the intent of the dramatic work and synthesises all production choices into a coherent creative vision?
- How could our folio document the full production process?
- How might our directorial vision engage with the artistic, cultural, social and personal contexts of the work we are interpreting?



Production schedule

A planning document that maps all tasks, deadlines, rehearsals, design milestones and production events across the timeline of a production, coordinating the work of all practitioners involved.

- How might we structure our production schedule to include time for reflection, feedback and documentation alongside the making?
- How could building a timeline help our ensemble work towards realising a shared directorial vision and what does it reveal about the interdependence of all production roles?



Cue sheet

A production document listing all technical cues (such as lighting, sound, projection, automation) in sequence, with instructions for operators. Used in rehearsal and performance to coordinate technical and performance elements.

- How might developing a cue sheet deepen our understanding of how the elements of production interact with performance to shape dramatic meaning and images?
- How does the cue sheet reflect our stylistic intention, and how do our choices about technical cues communicate the dramatic style we are working in?



Storyboard

A visual planning document using sequential images or diagrams to map out dramatic action, camera shots, staging or scene transitions before production begins.

- How might a storyboard help us translate a directorial vision into specific shot choices and encourage us to make decisions in advance?
- How could we use storyboarding to plan the staging of key dramatic moments?
- How might storyboarding serve as a tool for reflecting on the ideas, images and dramatic journey of our ensemble performance?

Dramatic forms | Production and design forms

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Directorial concept

A written articulation of the director's overarching creative vision for a work, including the central idea, intended audience experience, stylistic approach and the relationships between all production elements.

- How might our directorial concept reflect our deep engagement with and interpretation of the central ideas and/or scripted works we are sharing with an audience?
- How can we develop a directorial concept that provides shared purpose to unify all our production choices in a coherent and engaging audience experience?
- How could we use our directorial concept as a living document that evolves as we make discoveries in the creative and critical processes?



Set design

The practice of designing the physical environment of a production, including stage space, scenery, backdrops, furniture and architectural elements.

- How has our design considered dramatic and technical requirements, such as exits and entrances for actors?
- How could we develop a design concept that serves the intent and style of the dramatic work and our own directorial vision?
- How might our design choices communicate a specific dramatic style, such as realism, minimalism or symbolism?



Costume design

The practice of designing clothing, accessories, hair and makeup for performers. Directorial vision is communicated through design choices in characterisation, social status, historical period and cultural context.

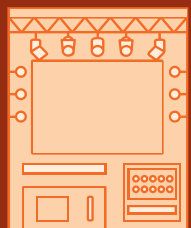
- How might our costume design choices communicate characters, ideas, feelings, images and stories to our audience, while being practical for actors and the dramatic/technical needs of the production?
- How could we develop a costume design concept that serves the dramatic work and our own directorial vision, using colour, texture and silhouette to shape dramatic meaning?
- How might we approach costume design in culturally responsible ways, particularly when representing specific cultural identities and traditions?



Promotion design

The practice of designing promotional materials for a production, including posters, programs, digital assets and marketing materials.

- How might our visual and written materials make the audience want to engage with our work by communicating a unified directorial vision for our production?
- How could we use image, language and symbol in our promotion design to signal dramatic style and conventions?
- How might our design communicate whose stories are being told and the intended audience?



Set/Lighting plan

Technical scale drawings representing the physical arrangement of the stage space (set plan) or the positioning and focus of all lighting instruments (lighting plan). Used by designers and crew to build and rig the production.

- How might producing a set or lighting plan require us to think practically about how our directorial vision translates into a buildable, stageable performance environment?
- How could a lighting plan help us articulate exactly how light will be used to heighten key moments and shape the dramatic journey for the audience?