

Summer Design Project 2020

The Selfish Giant

By Oscar Wilde



This is a short story written by Oscar Wilde for the amusement of his children and was published in a collection of fairy tales in 1888. The collection includes tales of magic and mystery but each story has at its core a message of morality and humanity. Oscar Wilde drew on his Irish ancestry when writing these stories and even though the tales range over geography and time each is told with respect for the beauty of language and the poetry of and storytelling tradition of his homeland.

The project: Each student will be designing the costumes for the characters from the story for a hypothetical film about the life of Oscar Wilde. The story will form a short section in the film where we will see Oscar reading to his two sons, Cyril and Vyvyan by the nursery fire in 1888.... Then we fade to the fantastic world of the story. You may design the characters in any way that you feel is appropriate for the story. Remember that this is a section of a film which is set in the latter part of the 19th century so you may want to consider the design styles of fairy tales published at this time but you are not confined to this style.

There are three distinct sections in the project for you to consider:

- Firstly to read the story. Read it through once and think about how this first reading made you feel... this first simple response is impossible to replicate and important as it helps you to understand your first fresh reaction to the story before you start to pick it apart. The second reading is a close reading where you can make a note of each character, the setting, the passage of time, any other details that might have an impact on your design ideas. You may then wish to consider some design ideas prompted by these first two readings before you read the story for a third time to really immerse yourself in the text. In this third reading you should be looking closely at the language and the use of imagery, symbolism and poetry. The style of the language is important for a costume designer to get in touch with the characters. How the writer describes the characters? How do the characters talk to each other? And does the author talk to you directly? Link to story online <http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/SelGia.shtml>

- Second: Research costume ideas before you start to draw. Using the notes you've made on the text start to explore different ideas for your costume design. Allow yourself the time to explore many different research paths. It is only when you start to research that you can find ideas and inspiration that can lead to original interpretation of the characters and bring the story to life. Be open to inspiration from many different sources. The language of the story will help you visualise the characters, this is a fantasy story so it does not have to fit into a specific time period but as a costume designer you do need to consider how each character relates to each other. They do need to look as if they occupy the same story universe. Think of colour, texture, shape and detail, as each of these elements help to pull disparate characters together (think of how colour is used in the Emerald City characters in Wicked. The green colour is dominant and helps to create a powerful visual impact but each of the costumes is very individual). You may want start your design journey by imagining the setting of the story, nature and the seasons play a large part in the story so researching gardens and nature might be an interesting place to start. You are the designer so you are free to find inspiration from anywhere. Remember that these are designs for a hypothetical film so you can if you wish, include ideas which might rely on special effects but you are designing costumes for actors not for animated characters
- Third: Design the characters (list of characters can be found at the end of this document) .Each design can be drawn by hand using any drawing media that you are comfortable with (including tablet or computer). Each design must be in full colour, on A3 paper (or the design can be printed onto A3 paper). Each character should be seen full length (feet are important) and have faces. It is important that you try and convey the personality of the characters from the story so faces and expressions are important. It is also important that you show different body shapes, different ages and perhaps different ethnicities if appropriate. Costume designs are not fashion drawings, costume is about the interpretation of character and telling stories through clothing. Lastly try not to look at any previous productions of the story as these will inevitably effect your design decisions and prevent your designs being original and individual.

Character list:

1. The Giant
2. The Cornish Giant
3. The children (you should design a group of no less than 8 children, girls and boys , age ranging from 5 – 12)
4. Spring -spring is a character and can be female or male
5. Snow - character can be male or female
6. Frost - male character
7. North Wind – male character
8. Hail- male character
9. The little boy
10. Oscar Wilde – 1888 London

- 11. Cyril – 1888 London
- 12. Vyvyan – 1888 London



