



“A Labor of Love”, Theatre Art celebrates the magic of theatre by recognizing its designers and artists.

A set, no set? How should it be lit? What will the actors wear? How will the set fly in, disappear, suggest the mood? Who will move what when, hand the leading lady her boa and top hat? Don't forget to put the gun on the table! What's the right prop for the gag? How big should it be? What color? The same questions can be considered of the hair. The designers, artists and crew of the theatre make it all seamless magic. They do it behind the curtains, in the lighting and sound booth, on the cat walk, in the shop or dressing rooms. They design it, build it, sew it, wash it, paint it, mike it, light it...then let the actors take the stage. They put it up and take it down.

#### The Inspiration for the Exhibit:

I am not a theatre expert, but my love of theatre arts began as I accompanied my mother, Elizabeth Check Kachmar to the Polka Dot Playhouse on Pleasure Beach. She was the first set designer of the Polka Dot when it began in 1954 at Redman's Hall in Stratford, CT. To the left is a photo of her nailing the first Polka Dots on the theatre building that was knocked down to make room for I-95. The founder of the community theatre which is now the Playhouse on the Green was David Reed. Living in Stratford I had the great fortune of living within bike riding distance of the Shakespeare Theatre. I was mesmerized by many actors and performances. I met Katherine Hepburn, James Earl Jones, Christopher Plummer. I knew Fred Gwynne not only as Herman Munster but also for his performance in Shakespeare's 12<sup>th</sup> Night. The traditional and adaptations of Shakespeare provided opportunities for creative interpretation. When the house doors opened the audience was transported to another place and time. The anticipation created was like waiting to open a beautifully wrapped present. Busloads of patrons came from New York and New England to see productions at the Shakespeare Theatre. It is a treasure just waiting to be resurrected to provide a source of enrichment for generations to come.

The intention of this exhibit is to share the experience of the proximity of magic that I enjoyed growing up with and around the Shakespeare Theatre. This was a blessing bestowed on Stratford residents. Another resource of magic close to home, specific to this exhibit is Leo Meyer of Atlas Studio. Although I had heard of Leo Meyer and knew of his Atlas Studio Scenic Design shop in Bridgeport, I recently have had the pleasure to learn more about his career. He has worked on Broadway and for theaters around the country for over 50 years. He ran Atlas Studio for 30 years. Leo will give a talk on Sunday June 20<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. about set design, research and creation. I want to thank him and his colleagues. City Lights is proud to exhibit works from some of the most accomplished contemporary designers and artists in theatre, film and T.V. Special Thanks to: James Lee Beatty, Michael Yeagan, Leo Meyer, Dan Goggin, Vladimir Shpitalnik, Michelle Beaulieu, Jayson Hayes, Laurie Frederick Cohen, Lynn Muniz, Leslie Weinberg and Bob Bresnick of Puppetsweat, Chad Anderson, Michelle Beaulieu, Andy Pinto and Steve Purtee.

