

Honors Thesis Statement
***Titus Andronicus* Crafts. Millinery, Armor, Etc.**

Bringing the stage version of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* to life was overall a unique learning experience and though I did not gain from it the experiences I had expected, I did learn a variety of other things both useful and beneficial. To begin with I worked closely with the design team, especially the costume designer Kyle Schellinger and head of costume crafts Lydia Giese, evaluating what methods would be the most effective for the needs of the show and which ones were the most cost effective in terms of our budgetary constraints. The first step in this process was to have a meeting to discuss the needs of the show. We identified a list of things that fell into the crafts category and Patrick Holt, the university's assistant professor of costume design, gave us an example of the kinds of materials and processes he would like for us to use in the execution of those crafts.

Over the course of the project Lydia and I researched our options and scoured the costume shop to discover just what materials were available for use and which would produce the desired looks. In the end we constructed 8 leather "goth" headbands, cut with a strap cutter and with a leather medallion shape, dyed and covered in beads, glued to the front via a suede back piece. The beads themselves were attached in a variety of ways. Some of the larger beads could be sewn directly onto the leather with heavy weight thread, but many had to be glued with barge cement or glass and bead adhesive to secure them to the leather. The headbands themselves are fastened with a small bit of elastic cord in the back.

One of the largest tasks to accomplish for this show was the distressing of most of the leather armor pieces including the wrist guards or vambraces and the greaves. The vambraces needed to be dyed black, rather than the factory natural tan, then a few of them (namely the pieces for the Roman military characters) needed to have studs added to 'fancy' them up a bit and give them some character. All pieces needed to be distressed by sanding the edges of the leather, scuffing and scarring the heavy use areas to make it appear as though these men had been in battle for several years, and to have imitation rust stains added to all the studded items.

To begin the distressing process we took a number of pairs of greaves and vambraces outside to test what parts of the items would wear the fastest and what kind of damage it would be likely to suffer. We then took those example pieces back into the shop and recreated those natural effects, though to a much worse degree, in the shop. These effects were achieved using primarily sandpaper, a dremel, a cheese grater, and numerous types of paint combinations particularly layered to create a mottled color effect.

One of my particular favorites out of the pieces created for this show was the cook's hat worn by Titus in the closing scene. The end result of one afternoons work this hat was patterned out mostly by guesswork and measured out to the actor's head measurements. Constructed of some scrap fabric left over from another costume, this hat came out quite perfectly and I couldn't be happier with it.

Given some unexpected time constraints that were placed on this project that brought the total crafts build time down from the hoped for month or more to an approximant two weeks I am quite completely pleased that everything was completed on time and to specifications. I think there are many aspects of this project that came out quite beautifully and I really enjoyed making, there are also other aspects which I feel that given more time and access to better resources, I could vastly improve upon. Overall I count it a success and valuable experience in dealing with different types of designers who have different levels of expectations and different means of expressing them.