



Set designer

Description:

Set designers are responsible for designing the sets for a film or television production. This might include planning, sourcing and creating sets, graphic, props, lighting and costumes.

Once the concept for the set is decided, set designers usually appoint and manage an art department, which includes a design and construction team.

Personal testimony:

I absolutely love my job. Contrary to popular belief, it's not always glamorous but it's always interesting, exciting and challenging. However, during the years I have worked in the industry it's become harder and harder to get work. The industry is very quiet at the moment because so many producers and directors are struggling to get enough money together to get the projects up and running. Copyright infringement is crippling our industry. No longer can a film's success be reflected either in box office receipts or DVD sales, - it's harder than ever to measure how well a film has been received. Inevitably, that makes it more difficult to approach funders for subsequent projects, so once again funding stalls. There's so much talent out there and more people clamouring to get into the film industry all the time. Without the support of people buying DVD's and cinema tickets, and legally downloading, there's a real danger that, in the future, there may not be much of a British film industry to support.

Duncan Windram-Wheeler - Set Designer - 'Red Dwarf' and 'Red Riding' and films including '51st State'.

Industry facts

Most set designers work as freelancers, rather than having a permanent contract. Like many others in the film industry, they rely on new shows and movies being made in order to stay in work. A lot of detailed work goes into designing a realistic and atmospheric set. For example, in 'Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix', the atrium in the Ministry of Magic is over 200 feet in length, making it the largest and most expensive set build for the Harry Potter film series to date. Meanwhile the set of Number Twelve, Grimmauld Place contains the Black family tapestry spread across three walls. Copyright infringement means that there is less funding to make new films and television programmes, which means less opportunity for the creation of sets, and less opportunity for us, as a viewer, to enjoy watching.

