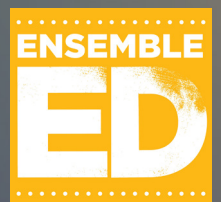




BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

DIRECTED BY LIESEL BADORREK



AN ENSEMBLE THEATRE
EDUCATION RESOURCE BY
SOPHIE KELLY

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ICON LEGEND



Discussion
Activity



Create and
Perform



Reflection

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Ensemble Theatre proudly acknowledges the Cammeraiagal people of the Eora nation as customary custodians of the land on which we stand and share our stories.

In harmony with the land and water, its seasons and cycles, the Cammeraiagal people practiced their culture for thousands of years and the connection continues to this day.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

PREFACE

This education resource for Ensemble Theatre's production of THE GLASS MENAGERIE, by Tennessee Williams, has been designed for secondary students and teachers across Australia. Exercises have been designed that encompass theoretical and practical components and can be applied to different stages of learning at the discretion of the teacher, class and context.

CURRICULUM LINKS

For NSW based students, THE GLASS MENAGERIE and its accompanying resources has links to the following syllabus outcomes within the NESA Curriculum:

DRAMA

STAGE 6

Year 12: Studies in Drama and Theatre (Significant Plays of the 20th Century)

Making: H1.3

Performing: H2.2, H2.4, H2.5

Critically Studying: H3.1, H3.3, H3.4, H3.5

Year 11: Theatrical Traditions and Performance Styles (Naturalism)

Making: P1.3, P1.4 Performing: P2.1, P2.2, P2.6

Critically Studying: P3.1, P3.2, P3.4 STAGE 5

Making: 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.4

Performing: 5.2.1, 5.2.3

Appreciating: 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.3

STAGE 5

Making: 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.4

Performing: 5.2.1, 5.2.3

Appreciating: 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.3



KEY COMPETENCIES

- Critical and creative thinking
- Ethical understanding
- Collecting, analysis and organising information
- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organising activities
- Literacy

KEY THEMES AND IDEAS

- Memory
- Escapism
- Gender Roles
- Familial responsibility
- Unfulfilled desire



SYNOPSIS

Tennessee Williams' *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* is a memory play that explores the emotional struggles of the Wingfield family in 1930s St. Louis. The story is narrated by Tom Wingfield, who recalls his family's troubled past with a mixture of nostalgia and regret. The central characters are Tom, his overbearing mother Amanda, and his shy, disabled sister Laura.

Amanda, a former Southern belle, holds high hopes for her children, particularly for Laura, whom she believes needs a suitor to secure her future. Laura, with a physical limp, is socially awkward and escapes into the world of her glass menagerie, a collection of fragile glass animals that symbolize her own vulnerability. Tom, who works at a warehouse, longs for adventure and escape but feels trapped by his responsibilities to his family.

Amanda pressures Tom to find a "gentleman caller" for Laura, and he reluctantly invites Jim O'Connor, a co-worker, to dinner. Jim is kind to Laura, but it is revealed that he is already engaged. This revelation shatters Amanda's dreams for Laura and highlights the family's unfulfilled desires and illusions.

In the aftermath, Tom becomes increasingly dissatisfied with his life and decides to leave to pursue his dreams. He abandons his family, though he is haunted by guilt, particularly regarding Laura, who remains vulnerable and isolated in her world of glass animals. The play ends with Tom reflecting on his departure, symbolizing the fragile nature of memory, dreams, and human connections.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE poignantly captures the themes of family, illusion, and the painful pursuit of unattainable dreams, making it one of Williams' most iconic works.



Laurette Taylor as Amanda Wingfield in the original Broadway production of *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* at the Playhouse Theatre (1945).



Pictured: the cast of the original Broadway production in 1945. Left to right: Anthony Ross, Laurette Taylor, Eddie Dowling and Julie Haydon.

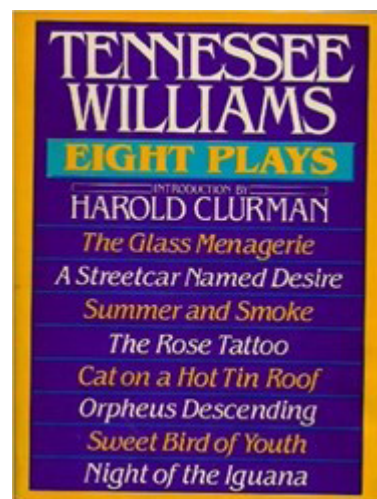


Pictured: the cast of the original Broadway production in 1945. From left, Julie Haydon, Laurette Taylor, and Eddie Dowling

LIFE OF THE WRITER – TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

Tennessee Williams, born in 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi, became one of the most influential American playwrights of the 20th century. Known for his deeply emotional and complex characters, Williams' works often explored themes of desire, loneliness, and societal constraints. He rose to fame with his play *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* (1947), which delved into the breakdown of a troubled woman, Blanche DuBois. His plays often captured the struggles of marginalized characters, including women, homosexuals, and the mentally ill, confronting the harsh realities of life in the South and the American experience. Other notable works include *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* (1944), *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF* (1955), and *THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA* (1961), which further cemented his place in American theatre.

Williams' personal life was marked by turmoil, which deeply influenced his writing. Struggling with mental illness, alcoholism, and the pressures of fame, Williams' later years were filled with personal losses and professional setbacks. Despite this, his works continued to resonate with audiences for their raw emotion and unflinching look at human vulnerability. Williams received numerous awards during his career, including two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama, and is regarded as one of the greatest playwrights in American literature. He passed away in 1983, leaving behind a legacy that shaped the course of American theatre and continues to inspire artists to this day.



CHARACTER LIST

AMANDA WINGFIELD

Amanda Wingfield, is a complex and deeply troubled woman. She is a faded Southern belle, clinging to memories of her youthful beauty and the grandeur of her past, while struggling to make ends meet in the present.



Amanda is overbearing and often delusional, imposing her own unfulfilled dreams and expectations onto her children, Tom and Laura. Her intense desire for Laura to find a suitor and secure a better future, fuels much of her action, even as her constant nagging and unrealistic hopes create tension within the family. Though she exudes strength and determination, Amanda is ultimately a tragic figure, trapped in her illusions and the harsh realities of her life.

TOM WINGFIELD

Tom Wingfield, the narrator of THE GLASS MENAGERIE, is a young man caught between his responsibilities to his family and his yearning for freedom. Intelligent and creative, Tom dreams of escape from the suffocating atmosphere of his home, where he cares for his fragile sister, Laura, and his domineering mother, Amanda. His restlessness and desire for adventure often clash with his sense of duty, leading him to work at a warehouse job he despises to support his family. Tom's internal conflict, fueled by both love and resentment, makes him a complex character. Despite his longing for independence, his guilt over leaving his family behind is ever-present, adding a layer of tragedy to his character.



LAURA WINGFIELD

Laura Wingfield, is a fragile soul, physically and emotionally vulnerable. She has a limp that causes her great self-consciousness, making her retreat into a world of isolation and fantasy. Laura's greatest comfort comes from her collection of glass animals, which symbolize her own fragility and her desire for beauty and escape. She is tender-hearted and deeply sensitive, but also passive, often unable to assert herself in the face of her mother's intense pressure or her brother's restlessness. Despite her quiet nature, Laura possesses a quiet dignity and an inner strength that emerges in moments of personal connection, particularly with her admirer, Jim. Her character embodies the theme of unrealized potential, as she yearns for love and a sense of belonging yet remains trapped in her own insecurities.



JIM O'CONNOR

Jim O'Connor, is a charming and well-meaning young man, who serves as a brief source of hope and connection for Laura. He is a former high school classmate of Tom and is invited to the Wingfield home as a potential suitor for Laura. Jim is confident, outgoing, and optimistic, with a belief in self-improvement and achieving success. Despite his genuine kindness toward Laura, Jim's attention is ultimately focused on his own future, and he unintentionally shatters Laura's illusions when he reveals that he is already engaged. His character serves as both a catalyst for Laura's emotional growth and a reminder of the stark differences between her dreams and reality. Jim's role highlights themes of hope, disillusionment, and the fragility of dreams.



MEET THE TEAM

CREATIVES



TENNESSEE WILLIAMS
PLAYWRIGHT



LEISEL BADDOREK
DIRECTOR



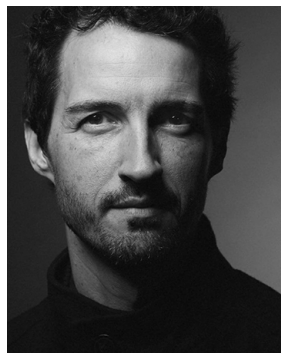
GRACE DEACON
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER



VERITY HAMPSON
LIGHTING DESIGNER



MARIA ALFONSINE
COMPOSER &
SOUND DESIGNER



DAMIAN DE BOOS-SMITH
COMPOSER &
SOUND DESIGNER



**LINDA
NICHOLLS-GIDLEY**
DIALECT COACH



CHLOË DALLIMORE
INTIMACY COORDINATOR



**KRYSTELLE
QUARTERMAIN**
STAGE MANAGER



LARA KYRIAZIS
ASSISTANT STAGE
MANAGER



LILY MATELJAN
COSTUME SUPERVISOR

CAST



BLAZEY BEST



BRIDIE MCKIM



TOM ROGERS



DANNY BALL

Q&A WITH LIESEL BADORREK, DIRECTOR

IS THE IDEA OF THE THE GLASS MENAGERIE BEING A 'MEMORY PLAY' SOMETHING THAT INTRIGUED AND EXCITED YOU AS A DIRECTOR? OR IS IT AN IDEA YOU HAD TO WRESTLE WITH?

I found the fact that THE GLASS MENAGERIE is a memory play to be a very exciting prospect, and also quite theatrically liberating. It presents the possibility to depart from realism and lean into the symbolism of devices like lighting, music and physical style. Williams suggests a lot of his own ideas for the staging of the play in his introduction, and while I didn't feel compelled to adhere to these, I did find them very useful and interesting, and they helped me understand the possibilities for a 'memory play'.



DID YOU COME TO THE PLAY WITH A SPECIFIC 'VISION' IN MIND OR IS IT SOMETHING THAT DEVELOPED AS YOU WORKED WITH THE ACTORS AND CREATIVES ACROSS THE PRE-PRODUCTION AND REHEARSAL PERIOD?

I always enjoy collaborating with cast and creatives on the making of any work. I knew I wanted to explore the play in terms of Williams own notion of 'plastic theatre'. For our production this includes, among other devices, the use of key passages of stage direction as part of the score or soundscape. Those ideas have become more finely honed during rehearsals as the highly skilled cast explore the best ways to express or present these ideas for an audience. I think we are really honouring Williams' vision for the play with our use of these specific theatrical devices.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF THE REHEARSAL PROCESS FOR YOU?

The research that starts the process for me is always a delight. Listening to podcasts, reading books and articles and watching interviews as well as parts of previous productions and film adaptations of the play help to create a broad knowledge of, and deep feeling for the work. Having said that, the most enjoyable part of the process are those times in the rehearsal room when we unlock something together - when as a result of the work we're doing we make a discovery - that's always a thrill.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR ASPIRING DIRECTORS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I feel compelled to give two pieces of advice to aspiring directors. The first is to see as much theatre as you can afford. Learn from other people's ideas. The second is to make your own work in any way you can. It doesn't necessarily even have to be a play. It could be an act for a party or cabaret, a staged reading or a one-off piece of work for an event - anything that gets the ideas out of your head and into a performance.



Q&A – BLAZEY BEST, ACTOR

AMANDA WINGFIELD IS OFTEN SEEN AS A COMIC BUT DEEPLY TRAGIC FIGURE. DOES THIS RESONATE WITH YOU? HOW DO YOU SEE HER?

I think that description is absolutely apt. She is a woman deeply mired in regret and disappointment, unable to cope with the dissonance between the life she expected for herself and the life she is, in fact, living. This is a woman living in her own tragedy. However, like any exquisitely observed character she is instantly recognisable and therefore very funny.



WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING ON A TENNESSEE WILLIAMS PLAY?

I've never done a Tennessee Williams before and I am astonished at the beauty of the language. It's full of alliteration and assonance and vivid imagery.

YOU ARE KNOWN FOR YOUR HUGE BODY OF WORK ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF THEATRICAL GENRES – DO YOU APPROACH EACH ROLE WITH A SIMILAR PROCESS, OR DOES IT CHANGE DEPENDING ON WHAT THE ROLE REQUIRES?

I have in the past approached 'significant' roles with more reverence and seriousness but I now believe that's a mistake. I think it's important to approach any role with an open mind and a sense of play. Even sad stuff. Then you're free to surprise yourself.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WHO WERE THINKING OF PURSUING A CAREER IN THE PERFORMING ARTS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

To any young person considering a career as an actor I would say: always ALWAYS do a voice warm up. Before rehearsal and before performance. A free, strong, flexible voice lets you go wherever you need to go emotionally to serve the character. It'll make you a better actor. It's not a wanky waste of time.



Q&A WITH DANNY BALL, ACTOR

FROM THE OUTSET OF THE PLAY, YOUR CHARACTER, TOM WINGFIELD, REFERS TO THE PLAY AS A "MEMORY PLAY". WHY DO YOU THINK TENNESSEE WILLIAMS USED THIS CONVENTION? DID IT AFFECT THE WAY YOU APPROACHED THE CHARACTER OF TOM?

The form of a 'memory play' is useful as it aligns with Tom's character arc. As he journeys back into the past in order to make sense of his present and future, the audience experiences the deconstruction, and unreliability of memory. It absolutely affected the way I approached Tom, as there are two timelines for the character... It's the Tom Wingfield multiverse.



TOM CONSTANTLY TALKS ABOUT WANTING TO "ESCAPE." HOW DO YOU THINK TOM'S PERSONAL DESIRES CONFLICT WITH HIS REALITY, AND HOW DOES THAT IMPACT HIS DECISIONS?

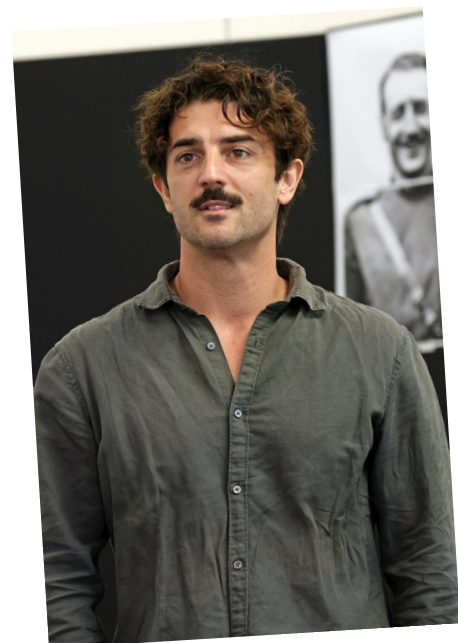
Tom wants to fulfil his personal desire of becoming a poet, but more than that, he pursues self-actualisation, to find his authentic self. He's ultimately got a bit of a Sophie's Choice, and he chooses himself over his familial obligations. This choice has tremendous repercussions and is why Tom in the present decides to go back into his memory to understand it.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF BRINGING THE CHARACTER OF TOM WINGFIELD TO LIFE?

The dramaturgy of the play is really tough, it's not a formulaic, 'well made play' that most of us are used to. It's highly imagastic, symbolic and heightened. The tone is constantly shifting, and like memory, it isn't fixed.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WHO WERE THINKING OF PURSUING A CAREER IN THE PERFORMING ARTS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

If you can imagine a life doing something else, do that thing. If you think your life could only be made full by a career in the performing arts, then do it. It is beyond challenging, but also completely life affirming.



Q&A WITH BRIDIE MCKIM, ACTOR

THE CHARACTER OF LAURA WINGFIELD IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS BEING 'DELICATE' OR 'GENTLE'. DOES THIS RESONATE WITH YOU AS THE ACTOR PLAYING HER? HAVE YOU ENJOYED DISCOVERING OTHER ASPECTS TO HER CHARACTER?

Parts of Laura are delicate and gentle, which is evident in the love she has for Amanda and Tom and the way she cares for her glass menagerie. However, I don't think these qualities define her. Laura is also curious, courageous in her own way, and has a great sense of humour. I'm enjoying discovering these qualities in her.



LAURA'S MENAGERIE OF GLASS ANIMALS IS THE CENTRAL SYMBOL OF THE PLAY – WHAT DO YOU THINK HER ATTACHMENT TO THESE ANIMALS TELLS US ABOUT HER CHARACTER?

The glass animals symbolise the beauty of the love the Wingfield's have for each other. However, their love requires constant care and nurturing to be maintained. The glass animals signify the fragility of the dynamic of the Wingfield family. It is just one knock away from absolutely shattering.

AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER, LAURA'S SHORT-LIVED 'RELATIONSHIP' WITH JIM O'CONNOR IS HEART-BREAKING TO WATCH. WHAT WAS IT LIKE WORKING WITH TOM AND DIRECTOR LEISEL, TO DISCOVER THIS MOMENT BETWEEN THE TWO CHARACTERS?

We are exploring a version of Laura where she is comfortable and confident in her home environment, however the outside environment creates barriers and anxieties for her. Jim is a symbol of the outside world coming into her safe space. Though this is terrifying for Laura, it presents an opportunity for us to see how she could potentially flourish in a world outside of her home and glass menagerie.

COULD YOU SHARE A PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN ABOUT WORKING IN THE PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY THAT HAS RESONATED WITH YOU?

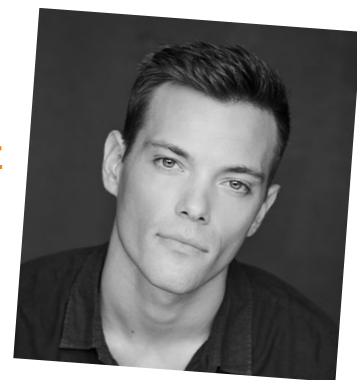
If you are passionate about performance I recommend finding as many opportunities to perform as possible. That could be your school play, local community theatre or improv theatre. However, I think that understating diverse perspectives and points of view is so important so you can empathise with the characters you play. So, soak up books, podcasts and movies!



Q&A WITH TOM ROGERS, ACTOR

THE CHARACTER OF JIM COULD BE VIEWED AS A SYMBOL OF HOPE IN THE PLAY, YET HE'S ALSO FLAWED. HOW DID YOU INTERPRET HIS ROLE WITHIN THE EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS OF THE WINGFIELD FAMILY?

Liesel and I had a little catch up before rehearsals began and it was a huge relief to discover we were on the exact same page with this version of Jim. It was important to take him beyond symbolism, beyond the archetype and beyond some of the condescension in his speeches. This Jim is well-intentioned and flawed, occasionally swept away by his drive for success and romance, but not arrogant or dismissive. Within the Wingfield dynamic, it was important to observe what Blazey, Danny and Bridie (they're pretty good) were bringing energetically, and find what contrasting energy would most cut through to brighten the air of the house. We wanted this Jim to really be able to read the room, socially and emotionally, softening his tone with Laura, lightening Tom's intensity and matching the energy of Amanda. This version of Jim also means that Laura's attraction isn't misguided. There is a feeling of true potential in a more loveable Jim.



HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THE ROLE OF JIM O'CONNOR? WERE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF HIS CHARACTER THAT REQUIRED EXTENDED RESEARCH?

The exciting aspect of Jim O'Connor was the lack of information Tennessee Williams provides about him. We know he was a high school star but learn nothing of his family and home life and the reason his trajectory flatlined in the last six years, although The Great Depression provides important context. Preparation for Jim included the technical aspects of dialect, physicality and script analysis. In terms of research, it was important to understand the context of the 1930's socially and politically. Particularly with gender roles and how young men were raised. Jim has also bought into the post-WW1 messaging, referring to Emily Meisenbach as a "kraut-head". As always, lots of preparation and research, and then... throw it all away and just be.

DO YOU THINK JIM'S CHARACTER EVOLVES OVER THE COURSE OF THE PLAY? WHAT ARE THE KEY MOMENTS OF CHANGE FOR HIM?

Although Jim has a delayed entrance and swift exit, it was important to find a strong arc and for him to leave changed by his night with the Wingfield family. When he arrives, without the knowledge of why he has been invited over, we see the jovial "gentleman" who is working on his "social poise". He seems impressive and outwardly confident, using his own plans to try and inspire Tom and charming Amanda with his natural humour. It is not until he connects with Laura that we see his key moments of change. Liesel and I discussed that we wanted Jim to truly fall in love with Laura for a moment in time, swept up in the romance of the night, he sees her and her beauty and unique magic. It was vital that the possibility and hope was palpable. When Jim discovers she is "Blue Roses" and he is able to reminisce and open up to her about high school, we see his insecurities and vulnerability beneath the veneer. Jim is highly aware of who he was in high school, the shining star, and how his success has not transferred to adult life over the past six years. But, he is not a quitter and truly believes in the "anything is possible for everyone" idea of the American Dream. This idea is what he wishes to pass onto Laura, encouraging her to ignore the "clump" and find her dream. They both share their passions, they connect physically and they are playful and flirty. Then, the climatic kiss breaks the magic. Jim realises what he has given to Laura and knows he has to confront her with truth. At the end of the night, Jim leaves changed by his night with Laura and will always live with "Blue Roses" and her broken unicorn.

COULD YOU SHARE A PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN ABOUT WORKING IN THE PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY THAT HAS HELPED YOU STAY MOTIVATED?

I have, and have had, some incredible mentors in my life who have shared invaluable advice, lessons and experiences with me. From teachers at school to directors to fellow actors, I have been inundated with gems of knowledge. The best and most consistent advice I have been given for staying motivated is the simplest... work hard (know your lines, understand your characters, work

on your voice and physicality), be you (bring your unique self to everything you do, do not try and fit a mould) and lead with respect and kindness (this is the easiest, the most important and the reason most actors work consistently). Also, please do what you LOVE. If you are OBSESSED with theatre or acting or direction or design or tech, please, please, please pursue it. It is a privilege to know what you are passionate about and to have the opportunity to make it your career. This is my professional theatre debut and I have known since I was nine years old, doing children's theatre in Newcastle, that this is what I wanted to do with my life. This is my absolute dream. Find your dream and go for it.



Q&A WITH COSTUME SUPERVISOR, LILY MATELJAN



CAN YOU EXPLAIN A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT THE ROLE OF A COSTUME SUPERVISOR IS? IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT THE ROLE THAT PEOPLE MIGHT FIND SURPRISING?

In its simplest form, the role of the costume supervisor is to help make the designer's vision become reality. I have to control the budget, including being across how much every item will cost to buy, make or hire and make sure it is all achievable within the budget we are given. I hire the crew that work within the costume department and manage their pay and workload. It's not enough that the costumes look good - they also have to be fit for purpose, so we constantly have to ask ourselves lots of practical questions: is the costume quick-changeable? Is there enough time to change? Are our cast comfortable? In basic terms, you are part of a big logistics team!

AS WELL AS YOUR WORK AS A COSTUME SUPERVISOR, YOU WORK ACROSS OTHER ASPECTS OF DESIGN – CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE OTHER ROLES YOU TAKE ON?

As well as a costume supervisor, I am a trained costume designer, costume maker and junior tailor. I work throughout the film and theatre industry in many different roles, sometimes doing multiple roles on one show!

CAN YOU TAKE US INTO THE MIND OF A COSTUME DESIGNER? WHERE OR HOW DO YOU START THE PROCESS OF DESIGNING A PIECE OF THEATRE?

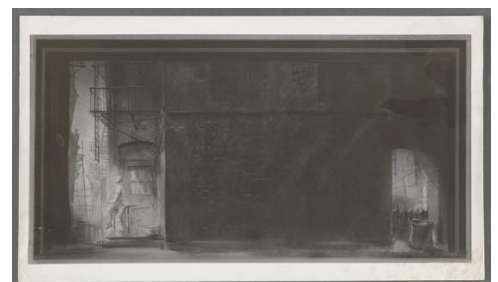
For myself, my process starts at the first read of the script. As I read, I can visualise the world and its characters, I put those initial ideas and feelings down on paper with reference images to help convey my vision. Then the conversations start with the director and set designer to create your world. I love getting lost in the world I create. I often store images or costume ideas away in my head ready to pull out for the right show. My inspiration isn't always from costumes or clothes but often from different art forms.

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND TO BE THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS OF THE DESIGN EXECUTION FOR THE GLASS MENAGERIE?

One of the most challenging things on this show has been finding the right fabrics for the large amount of made, rather than store-bought, garments. Sometimes when costumes are designed to be specially made for a particular show, you think a fabric you have seen many times throughout the years will be easy to find but in fact you struggle to find the right one! You have to make sure the weight, colour, fabric type and cost per meter is going to be right for the garment you're producing.

IF YOU HAD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR ASPIRING DESIGNERS/CREATIVES, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Keep creating and practice your skills - even if it is mock up designs of a script you love, or a story you enjoy - just keep using that muscle. There is no wrong or right way to design, so never feel you haven't done enough or that you are not good enough to take on a job - you might surprise yourself! The arts industry is hard work and a lot of work, but it is incredibly rewarding and exciting. No two shows are ever the same and you are always being creative within whatever role you are doing.



Photograph of set design for original Broadway Production of The Glass Menagerie in 1945. Set Design: Jo Mielziner

TEACHING AND LEARNING: ACTIVITY 1

THE JOURNAL

SUBJECT FOCUS: ENGLISH AND DRAMA

OBJECTIVE: DEVELOPING CHARACTER INSIGHT AND DISCOVERING DRAMATIC SUBTEXT

In this exercise students will develop a deeper understanding of character by writing a journal entry from the perspective of one of the main characters in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*. This exercise also helps students discover things unsaid by the characters. This is called 'subtext' and can often be inferred by a character's *actions* in a scene rather than by the *words* the playwright gives them.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Copies of *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* (for reference)
- Writing materials (pens, paper, or computers for typed entries)



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Character Selection:

- Ask each student to choose one character from the play to focus on. This could be based on the character they feel most connected to or one they find intriguing. Students could also choose to write a journal entry from the perspective of Tom and Laura's father or even an inanimate object (like the glass menagerie) if they want to explore a more creative angle.

2. Contextual Understanding:

- Ask students to re-read Scene 5, 6 and 7. If time is pressed, read either Scene 5 or 7.

3. Writing the Journal Entry:

- Ask students to write a journal entry as if it is either the morning before the gentleman caller arrives, or after he has left, paying close attention to the character they have chosen. In the journal entry, students should aim to capture the character's voice, emotions, and inner conflicts. This should be an opportunity for the student to reflect on the inner life of their character and express things that may only be hinted at in the text.

Here are some guidelines to help. In order to make the diary entry to feel more authentic, students might want to consider:

- Including the date and time of entry
- **Tone:** The tone should reflect the character's personality—Amanda's entry might be hopeful and nostalgic, Tom's might be frustrated and longing for escape, Laura's could be more introspective or self-doubting, etc.
- **Emotions:** Encourage students to explore the character's emotions, especially the more complex or hidden feelings they might not outwardly express in the play.
- **Reflections on Relationships:** The character should reflect on their relationships with others (Tom's strained relationship with Amanda, Amanda's controlling nature, Laura's feelings of inadequacy, etc.).



4. Sharing and Reflection:

- After students have written their journal entries, they can share them with the class (or in small groups). Encourage students to reflect on the different ways each character perceives the same events.
- Students can also compare how their own interpretations of the character align or differ from the actual text of the play.

- If time permits, students could work towards performing these journal entries as monologues.



5. Discussion:

- After sharing, engage the class in a discussion about what the journal entries revealed about the characters. Did any student's interpretation surprise others? How did the journal entry deepen their understanding of the character's motivations, struggles, or desires?

Why it Works:

- **Character Insight:** This activity helps students develop a deeper psychological understanding of the characters, beyond their actions in the play. It allows students to explore what's going on inside the character's mind, encouraging empathy and connection.
- **Creative Writing:** The activity allows students to practice writing in a creative and personal way, using the character's voice to explore themes and emotions from the play.
- **Perspective-taking:** Students see how different characters experience the same events in different ways, fostering a better understanding of the play's central conflicts and themes.



TEACHING & LEARNING: ACTIVITY 2

FLIP THE SCRIPT

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this activity is to explore how changes in character behavior or decision-making impact the dynamics of the story, its themes, and conflicts. This expanded activity helps students develop a nuanced understanding of the play's central conflicts and characters while encouraging them to think critically about how small changes in culture or behaviour can affect a larger narrative. It also promotes creative expression while reinforcing key elements of dramatic structure and analysis.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Copies of THE GLASS MENAGERIE for reference.
- Writing materials (pens, paper, or computers for typed entries).
- A board or large paper for brainstorming (optional).



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Introduction to the Activity:

- Begin by discussing the central themes of THE GLASS MENAGERIE, such as the tension between dreams and reality, family dynamics, responsibility, and personal freedom. Highlight the importance of character choices in the development of these themes.
- Explain that in this activity, students will rewrite a scene with a twist, changing a key decision or event that shifts the course of the narrative. Emphasize that the twist could involve time period, location, character behavior, or a shift in a character's objectives.

2. Character and Scene Selection:

- **Character Selection:** Ask each student or group of students to choose a character they wish to focus on.
- **Scene Selection:** Have students select a scene from the play that is pivotal to character development or to the play's conflict. Suggested scenes include:
 - **Scene 4:** Tom's struggle with his family expectations and the limits of his personal freedom.
 - **Scene 6:** The build-up to the Gentleman Caller's visit and Laura's fragile hopes.
 - **Scene 7:** The aftermath of the Gentleman Caller's departure and the consequences for Laura and Amanda.

Note: If students have read only part of the play, they can still engage by reimagining earlier scenes based on their understanding.

3. Twist Options: Give students a variety of twists to consider. Some possible scenarios include:

- **Time Period:** What if the play were set in the 1980s, 2000s, or even the present day? How would the characters' struggles with social norms, economic circumstances, and family expectations change in a different time period? What would be different about their interactions, especially with regard to the pressures of marriage, employment, or independence? Would their language sound different? Be sure to think about changes in speech and words or expressions used in different time periods.
- **Location:** What if the Wingfield family lived in a different city or country? How would their social circumstances change? Would Tom still want to escape, or would Amanda's controlling nature become even more apparent in a new environment?

- **Character Behavior or Objective:** Consider changing a major character's behavior or objective. Some ideas include:
 - What if Amanda didn't push Laura so hard to find a suitor? How would Laura's self-image change if she was not subjected to Amanda's high expectations? What would happen if Amanda became more accepting of Laura's introversion and fragility?
 - What if Tom decided to stay at home instead of leaving the family? How would the family dynamic change if Tom had chosen not to escape, or if he had stayed and taken on more responsibility? Would this have affected his relationship with Amanda and Laura differently?
 - What if Laura had been more assertive and pursued the Gentleman Caller on her own? How would this change the dynamic between her and Amanda? Would it affect Tom's sense of duty toward his family?

4. Writing the Twist:

Students should rewrite the scene with the twist they've chosen, paying attention to the emotional and psychological implications of the character's altered behavior or decisions. Encourage students to:

- **Reflect on character motivations:** What would motivate this character to make the new decision? How does it align (or not align) with their original motivations in the play? How does this twist reveal something new about the character?
- **Impact of the Twist:** How does the twist change the dynamics between characters? Does it create new conflicts, or resolve old ones? Does it deepen or challenge existing themes (e.g., escape, family expectations, personal freedom)?
- **Subtext:** Consider how the new version of the scene uncovers subtext—those thoughts, emotions, and desires that are hidden beneath the surface. What does the new decision reveal about the character that was previously unspoken?


5. Group Discussion and/or Performance:

After students have written their scenes, ask them to share their versions of the scene with the class or in small groups. Encourage them to discuss the following:

- How did the twist change the emotional tone of the scene? Did the character become more sympathetic, or did they seem more conflicted or distant?
- What new insights did the twist reveal about the character's internal struggles? How does the new behaviour change the way the character interacts with others?
- How does the twist affect the central themes of the play? Did the change in behavior deepen the themes of responsibility, escape, family, or personal identity? Or did it shift the focus to new themes?
- If the group is creating a performed version of their scene, encourage them to think about the dramatic elements they could consider:
 - What space are you performing in? Could you use this space to inform the scene?
 - What does your version of the Wingfield house look like when you are staging your scene? How does the twist in your scene change things from the original?
 - What kind of costuming will you wear? Again, does the twist in your scene mean that the costuming would be different from the original?
 - What kind of music or soundscape might you use to help create your scene?



- What kind of performance style will you use? Naturalism, heightened realism? Brechtian?

 **6. Class-wide Reflection and Debate:** Once the new scenes have been shared and/or performed, lead a class-wide discussion about how small changes in character choices can lead to very different outcomes. Ask the following questions to guide the conversation:

- How do different choices (like Tom staying at home or Amanda not pushing Laura) impact the family dynamic and each character's personal journey?
- What do the twists reveal about the central conflict in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*? How does changing the characters' actions alter our understanding of the play's key issues, such as the clash between dreams and reality, or the desire for personal freedom versus familial obligation?
- Which twist do you think would have resulted in the most significant change in the play's outcome? Would any of these changes have resolved or deepened the conflicts, or would they have simply created new tensions?



TEACHING AND LEARNING: ACTIVITY 3

MINING MEMORY

OBJECTIVE:

To help students understand how *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* is a “memory play” and how memory can be subjective, selective, and fragmented. Students will explore the idea that memory is not a clear, linear narrative but a complex reconstruction of emotions, thoughts, and sensory experiences. Through writing and performing a memory-inspired scene, students will gain insight into the ways Tennessee Williams uses this concept to “heighten the dramatic tension of the play and underscore the manipulative powers of memory..

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Copies of *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* (for reference)
- Writing materials (pens, paper, or computers for typed entries)
- A space to perform (classroom space, stage, or open area)
- Optional: Props or visual aids (such as photos, objects, or fabric) to help evoke the feeling of memory

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Introduction to “Memory Play” Concept:

Ask students to read Tom’s opening monologue in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, or have a single of group of students read it aloud to the class:

TOM enters dressed as a merchant sailor from alley, stage left, and strolls across the front of the stage to the fire-escape. There he stops and lights a cigarette. He addresses the audience.

TOM: Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion. To begin with, I turn bark time. I reverse it to that quaint period, the thirties, when the huge middle class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind. Their eyes had failed them or they had failed their eyes, and so they were having their fingers pressed forcibly down on the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving economy.

In Spain there was revolution. Here there was only shouting and confusion. In Spain there was Guernica. Here there were disturbances of labour, sometimes pretty violent, in otherwise peaceful cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Saint Louis. . .

This is the social background of the play.

Music begins to play

The play is memory. Being a memory play, it is dimly lighted, it is sentimental, it is not realistic. In memory everything seems to happen to music. That explains the fiddle in the wings.

I am the narrator of the play, and also a character in it. The other characters are my mother Amanda, my sister Laura and a gentleman caller who appears in the final scenes. He is the most realistic character in the play, being an emissary from a world of reality that we were somehow set apart from. But since I have a poet’s weakness for symbols, I am using this character also as a symbol; he is the long-delayed but always expected something that we live for.

There is a fifth character in the play who doesn't appear except in this larger-than-life-size photograph over the mantel. This is our father who left us a long time ago. He was a telephone man who fell in love with long distances; he gave up his job with the telephone company and skipped the light fantastic out of town. . . .

The last we heard of him was a picture postcard from Mazatlan, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, containing a message of two words - 'Hello - Good-bye!' and no address.

I think the rest of the play will explain itself

After reading, begin by discussing with students the concept of a "memory play." In *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, the events are presented from Tom's point of view, and because it's a memory, it is subjective, unreliable, and emotional rather than purely factual. Tom's memories are coloured by his feelings of guilt, longing, frustration, and love. Discuss how memories are often fragmented or distorted by time and emotion.

Key Points to Discuss:

- **Non-linear storytelling:** Memory is often not a straight timeline but jumps back and forth between past, present, and future. This is reflected in the play's structure, as Tom narrates from the future, presenting events in a disjointed manner.
- **Selective memory:** Tom (and other characters) selectively remembers things that are emotionally significant to them, even if they aren't entirely accurate.
- **Sensory elements:** Memories are often driven by sensory experiences, like sounds, smells, and visuals. These sensory details can evoke strong emotional responses and shape how we recall the past.



2. Class Discussion on Memory:

Once everyone has had a chance to , lead a discussion focusing on the memory aspect of *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*. You can guide the discussion with questions like:

- **Tom's Selective Memory:** How does Tom's memory of his family (and particularly Laura) reflect his emotional state? What does his memory leave out or distort to make the past more tolerable or more painful for him?
- **Illusion vs. Reality:** How does memory shape our perception of reality? How does Tom's memory of events differ from how they actually happened? What does this say about how we interpret our past?
- **The Role of Nostalgia and Regret:** How does Tom's selective recollection of the past (such as his feelings about Laura) highlight themes of nostalgia, regret, or loss?

Encourage students to compare their personal experiences of memory to how Tom navigates his memories in the play. The point of this exercise is to see how memory is shaped by emotion, and how memory as a narrative technique in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* mirrors the way we selectively recall events from our past.

3. Personal Memory Writing Exercise:

Ask students to think of a memory from their own life that has a strong emotional impact on them. This could be a memory from childhood, a special event, or a moment of loss or triumph.

Writing Guidelines:

- **Fragmentation:** Encourage students to write their memory as if it were a series of disjointed images or moments, rather than as a clear, linear story.
 - For example, a memory might jump from a smell of fresh-baked cookies to a feeling of embarrassment, to a vivid image of a parent's face.

- **Sensory Detail:** Have students include specific sensory details—sounds, smells, tastes, or feelings—that made the memory stand out.
- **Emotional Focus:** The focus should be on the feelings and emotions connected to the memory rather than factual details. This mimics how memory is more about emotional truth than objective truth.

Prompts:

- "Think of a moment when you felt an intense emotion (fear, joy, sadness, excitement). What images come to mind?"
- "What sensory details stand out to you from that memory? A smell, a sound, a color?"
- "How do you feel about this memory now, looking back on it?"



3. Performance Preparation:

Once students have written their memories, and discussed at large, ask them to make groups of three or four and share their memories with their group. After they have heard all the memories, select one fragment or moment from the collective group stories that stands out most to them. They will perform this moment, but with the focus on the emotions and sensory experience rather than the factual accuracy of the memory. Encourage students to use the conventions employed by Tom in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*.

Performance Guidelines: ask students to focus on these three elements in their piece:

- Memory that is fragmented and emotional
- Sensory focussed
- A sense of immediacy



4. Group Reflection:

After students perform, encourage a group discussion. Ask them to reflect on the following:

- How did it feel to perform a personal memory? Was it easy or difficult to relive those emotions in the moment?
- How did the fragmented nature of your performance mirror the way memories are experienced? Did you feel the memory was incomplete or disjointed?
- In *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, Tom says the play is a memory, not a literal recounting of events. How did this exercise help you understand that concept better?
- How do sensory details and emotions shape our memories? How did you use these to create a more vivid performance?



TEACHING & LEARNING: ACTIVITY 4

DESIGN YOUR OWN SET

OBJECTIVE

To explore the symbolic significance of the set and props in *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* and understand how these elements illuminate the major themes of the play. Students will gain insight into how physical space and objects are used in theatre to reflect characters' inner lives and draw out the thematic elements of the play. Additionally, this activity will help students develop collaborative skills while learning about the creative process behind set design in theatre.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Large paper or whiteboards for sketching designs.
- Markers, colored pencils, or digital design tools (if available).
- Reference material, including *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* text, to review the importance of key symbols like the glass menagerie, the apartment setting, the fire escape, and other important props.
- Craft materials (optional) for students to create miniature models or mockups of their designs (cardboard, scissors, glue, etc.). A shoebox or cardboard box makes a great base for a set design model.
- Computers or projectors (if available) for digital presentations or sketches.
- A camera or video equipment (optional) for recording group presentations.

INSTRUCTIONS:



1. Introduction to Set and Prop Design:

Start by discussing the importance of set design and props in theatre. Explain that the set is not just a backdrop for the action but often serves as a visual representation of the themes and inner workings of the characters. In *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, for example, the cramped apartment is a physical manifestation of the Wingfield family's emotional and psychological confinement.

Focus specifically on symbolic props and how Tennessee Williams uses them in the play. Some key symbols include:

- **The Glass Menagerie:** A delicate collection of glass animals, representing Laura's fragility, her emotional world, and her desire for escape.
- **The Fire Escape:** A symbol of Tom's yearning for escape and his desire to break free from his family.
- **The Broken Table:** This can symbolize the fractured relationships between the characters, particularly Amanda and Tom.
- **The Apartment:** The Wingfields' apartment, small and filled with memories, symbolizes both the confinement of the characters and their inability to move beyond their past.

Briefly discuss these symbols and how they can be represented in a set design.

2. Divide Students into Groups:

Divide the class into small groups (3-4 students per group). Each group will be responsible for designing a specific scene from the play. The groups should focus on one of the following:

- **Scene 1:** The Wingfield family at the dinner table, with Tom's frustrations beginning to surface.
- **Scene 4:** Tom's inner conflict is on display as he's torn between his family obligations and his dreams of escape.
- **Scene 6:** The Gentleman Caller's visit and Laura's emotional vulnerability.
- **Scene 7:** The aftermath of the Gentleman Caller's visit, when Laura is left heartbroken, and Amanda is devastated.

Alternatively, groups can choose to work on the overall set for the apartment and how it evolves across the play.

3. Design the Set and Props:

Each group should begin by designing their scene, paying particular attention to the symbolic meaning of their choices. Here's a step-by-step breakdown of how the groups should proceed:

- **Step 1:** The group should read through the selected scene carefully, paying attention to key moments, character actions, and emotions. Identify the key props or set elements in the scene, you want to incorporate into your own design.. For example, the glass menagerie could be placed in a certain way to draw attention to Laura's fragility, or the fire escape could be positioned near Tom to emphasize his internal struggle for freedom.
- **Step 2:** Set Design Students will create a layout of the scene's setting, using a large sheet of paper or digital tools. The design should include:
 - **Key furniture or architectural elements:** These could include the dining table, chairs, and the placement of windows or the fire escape.
 - **Symbolic placement:** For instance, the glass menagerie might be placed center stage, creating a focal point that reflects Laura's central role in the family dynamic, or the fire escape might be shown as both physically and emotionally distant from the Wingfields' lives, symbolizing Tom's unreachable dreams.
- **Step 3:** Each group should select props that convey key themes or emotions from the scene. For example:
 - **The Glass Menagerie:** Could be represented by actual glass animals, or it might be symbolized by fragile, shimmering objects placed in a way that reflects Laura's delicate emotional state.
 - **Amanda's Dreams of the Past:** The group might include props like an old-fashioned chair or a vintage photo album to convey Amanda's nostalgic fixation on the past and her obsession with finding Laura a suitor.
 - **The Fire Escape:** Could be represented by a physical element in the set or symbolized through lighting or positioning—this could highlight Tom's desire for freedom and escape.
- **Step 4:** Students should discuss the color scheme and lighting that will enhance the scene's emotional tone:
 - **Lighting:** Soft, dim lighting could represent the fragile world of Laura and the constraints of the Wingfield apartment. Bright, harsh lighting could symbolize Tom's frustration or the tension between illusion and reality.
 - **Colors:** Muted tones like grays, blues, and earth tones might evoke the sadness and confinement of the Wingfields, while brighter pops of color could reflect moments of hope or dreams (e.g., Amanda's flowered dress, Laura's pink attire).

4. Prepare and Present the Designs:

Once the groups have completed their designs, they should prepare a presentation that includes:

- **A description of the set design:** Explain the placement of key elements and how they reflect the themes of the scene.
- **Symbolism of props:** Justify the symbolic importance of each prop included in the design. For example, explain how the glass menagerie symbolizes Laura's fragility, or how the fire escape represents Tom's desire to escape his familial obligations.
- **Thematic Connections:** Discuss how the set and props support the broader themes of the play, such as the tension between illusion and reality, the fragility of human existence, or the struggle for freedom.

- **Lighting and Color Choices:** If relevant, the group should also explain how lighting and color choices will enhance the emotional atmosphere of the scene.



5. Class Discussion and Feedback:

After all groups have presented their designs, engage in a class-wide discussion. Use the following prompts to guide the conversation:

- How do the props and set designs reflect the illusion vs. reality theme?
- Did any group take an unexpected approach to symbolizing a key element? How did it change or deepen the understanding of the scene or the characters?
- How do the designs reflect the characters' emotional and psychological states?
- How could the set and props influence the audience's perception of the characters?

Encourage students to offer constructive feedback on each other's designs. Ask them to consider whether the design choices help make the play's themes and subtext clearer or whether any elements seem inconsistent with the text's emotional tone.



