# 2d – Production design content

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| Element | Explanation | Case study analysis | Project application |
| Space – locations, set dressing and props | The setting or location of a shot can be used to manipulate the audience perspective and create meaning.  The characters’ surroundings tell us about their world. The space can communicate information to the audience about the character and their journey. For example, placing a character on a cold and isolated beach could communicate loneliness.  Props can provide clues to a character's personality and values. They can also reveal the story's historical and cultural setting. | Review a scene from ‘Visible’ (2021) and explain how the location, set dressing and props have been used to set the scene, drive the narrative, and support characterisation.  Extension activity – Create your own directorial vision for the scene you reviewed. Plan the location, set dressing and props to communicate your personal vision of the scene. | Plan and explain your choices of locations, set dressing and props in your own film.  Ensure your choices are made clear in your storyboard. |
| Style – costume, hair and makeup | Costume, hair and makeup can be used to tell the audience about a character's sociocultural context. This includes aspects such as their cultural background, status, time period and the world in which they live. It could also indicate their profession, values and characteristics. The placement and movement of the actor within the shot, also reveals insights into the character's personality. | Select a scene from ‘Visible’ (2021) or one of the featured films. Create a character profile that analyses the way one character has been styled in that scene. What elements of costume, hair and makeup have been used? What do these elements tell audiences about that character? | Work with your team to create profiles for each character in your film. Explain how they will be styled and what effect this is intended to have in communicating aspects of that character to audiences. You could use reference images or take photographs of your actors to express your ideas visually. |
| Mood – lighting and atmosphere | Lighting has great power to create atmosphere. In general, there are 2 main forms of lighting. Low key lighting creates contrast between well-lit and shadowed areas. It is often used in thrillers and suspenseful scenes.  High key lighting creates a bright, even shot. It is more commonly used in comedies and light-hearted scenes.  Many cinematographers use ‘pracs’ or practical lights in a scene to help build atmosphere. Practical lights are lamps in the space which can double as props. The choice of using natural light or fluorescent light is also an important choice and builds the mood and atmosphere of the film. | Describe how the lighting changes in the different scenes of ‘Visible’ (2021) or your chosen short film. Compare how the lighting is creating different mood and atmosphere within each shot. | Plan the lighting scenarios for your own film production. Take both technical and creative decisions into account.  **Practical Tips**  Avoid shooting into the sun as it will create silhouettes of the subjects you are trying to capture.  Be mindful of the time of day you are planning to shoot and watch for shadows. Avoid shooting in lighting that creates strong shadows.  Use reflectors to ensure your subjects are lit evenly.  Coloured lighting can create meaning and mood through symbolism. This can also be enhanced with special lighting effects. |
| Performance – characterisation and expression | The ways actors use their physicality, voice and facial expressions can communicate a wide range of information to the audience. This can include the character’s emotional state and the mood of the scene, and can help audience members to connect with the meaning of each scene. It is important not to rely only on dialogue to communicate what is happening. | The short film ‘Visible’ (2021) uses very little dialogue to communicate the experience of the main character ‘Audrey’. Identify the elements of drama that have been used and describe 3 different examples in the film where the actor playing the main character and the supporting actors’ performance choices communicate their feelings and experiences without dialogue. | Identify the intentions of each scene in your short film and use playbuilding techniques as well as a manipulation of the elements of drama to convey these ideas to the audience. Consider how your performance can be best captured on film. |