

ASSISTANT PROPS MASTER
Job Description/Duties and Responsibilities

Overview:

The **UR International Theatre Program Props Master** is in charge of all props and prop making for Theatre Program productions. The PM manages student crews and is responsible for training them and scheduling their activities. The PM purchases, researches and oversees all props activities. The PM liaises with the production director, with designers, and with the URITP Production Manager.

The **Assistant Props Master** assists the PM in all duties and responsibilities as needed. S/he is responsible for getting and overseeing the gathering and organization of all rehearsal props. The APM will work closely with the Props Stage Manager of each individual production, as well as the show's Production Stage Manager. S/he creates and maintains all renewable props during production runs (and rehearsals if necessary), e.g. foodstuffs, blood, etc.

For the current academic year (06-07) these are some of the activities the APM will be involved in:

1. Creating a props database

This is a long term project that may last all year. It requires taking digital pictures of our entire current prop inventory, writing a description of each prop, and creating a database. The props room is the strangest place in the whole theatre. You will find the most unimaginable stuff located there, so the project should be a stimulating one! Additionally, you will become the living depository of URITP prop knowledge(!), a crucial role before, during, and after productions.

3. Research

This is a fundamental part of the props process. Each production has its own historical context that we need to be aware of. Everything should reflect this. Additionally, the aesthetic ideas of the set designer, as well as the safety of the actors and ease-of-use of the object will need to be researched and/or taken into account when procuring or building props.

4. Making props

This includes designing, building, and painting props. In addition, you may well find yourself helping out with set painting and decoration. Though this might seem the most enjoyable and interesting part of the APM's activities, be aware that it also requires a lot of responsibility, initiative and work.

5. Finding props

This is a fun—but demanding—part of the props process. It requires a strong artistic sensibility, and excellent problem-solving qualities. You may be required to hunt in odd places, pull things from the trash, find out ways and strategies to acquire odd things, and

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generally think of clever resources to procure objects needed for productions. After a while, you may well find yourself looking at everything as if it were a potentially useful prop.

6. Organization

The APM will, as mentioned earlier, work significantly with guest artists, stage managers and production personnel to realize the prop needs of each production. It is a position which demands, in addition to skill, someone who has good organizational abilities. This is important not only for following props lists, but equally for keeping track of the needs of the production as it develops, of switching out rehearsal props with “real” props as they become available or needed, and of dealing with the myriad of last minute details and changes that occur. All this in an efficient and calm manner! Do be aware that there will be significant evening hours required of the APM, as well as weekend work, etc. Generally, the hours are flexible enough to accommodate most of your current commitments.

Finally, at the end of each show, a prop strike occurs, where borrowed and loaned items are returned, props are restocked in the prop room, and prop cabinets and locations are cleaned and returned to pre-production condition. The APM must be available to attend these strikes.

Conclusion:

In general, we will be working on all these projects together. At the beginning of each production, a joint effort is going to be needed to help with updating the props room database and, when we are in the middle of the production, we will all be helping in the building, painting, and finding of stuff. The Assistant Props Master should be someone who is very flexible in terms of time and ability; someone who works well under pressure; someone who is organized and resourceful, and someone who can assume significant responsibilities and meet deadlines. As APM you will develop valuable skills and abilities, both intellectual and practical. We believe that these skills will be of enormous help to you in your future careers.