

Creating Effective Documentation

Phil and Kathe Gust

Virtual programming for Costume-Con 39

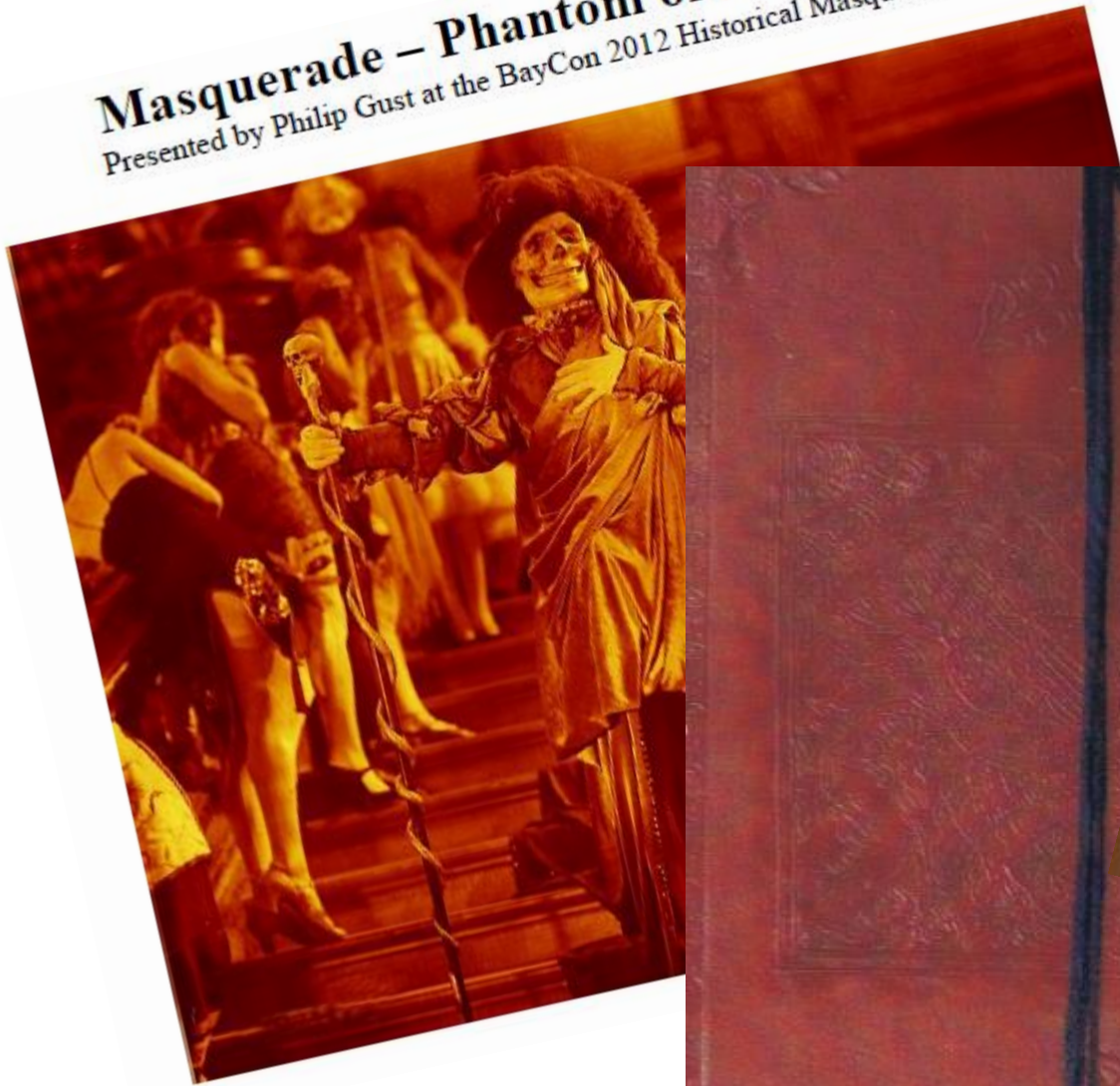
“Things That Go Bump on the Net” April 23-25, 2021

Examples

- Some of the documentation mentioned in the presentation can be viewed and/or downloaded at - <http://www.celefinniel.net>

Masquerade – Phantom of the Opera

Presented by Philip Gust at the BayCon 2012 Historical Masquerade



What is documentation?

- May be a separate award
- Differs by competition
 - Historical / Fantasy-SF / Anime
- Differs by type of costume
 - Replica / re-creation
 - From art or literature
 - Original design

Why bother to do it?

- You get better judging
 - Less familiar fandoms won't hurt you
 - Provides a valid comparison
 - Demonstrates your commitment
 - Showcases your talents

What to consider

- Is this a recreation?
 - Provide screencaps
- Will you have all layers judged?
 - Document all the layers
- Are you using art or an original design?
 - Provide a photo or drawing
- Is this from literature?
 - Provide a quote and a drawing

4 levels of documentation

1 – No documentation or minimal accurate information (place, year, pattern source).

2 – A few decent photos or drawings, with captions.

3 – As in 2 with more details. List of sources, specific examples, rationale for major design elements, fabric choice, and construction methods.

4 – As in 3 plus information proving correctness of all elements of the costume, including the minor details. Displaying your understanding of style of the period, explanation of any changes you purposely made and why.

Category 1

- Does having no documentation hurt me?
 - In historical competitions, yes it may.
 - If the judges do not know your fandom, yes it may.
 - If you did an original design, yes it may.

It almost always helps if you provide a baseline for the judges.

Category 2

This category is the baseline you provide.

- A photo or photos of a work of art.
- Description quotes from the literature that inspired you.
- A sketch or sketches of your original design.
- Screencaps or publicity stills from a film or game.

Our example of this is:

- “Comrades in Arms” – ComicCon 2006, an early competition. The first where we had any documentation.

Comrades in Arms



**Théoden, King of Rohan
Portrayed by Bernard Hill**

**Film: Lord of the Rings: The Two
Towers and Lord of the Rings:
Return of the King**



**Théoden, King of Rohan
Portrayed by Philip Gust**

Category 3

This category builds on Category 2.

- Add a couple of books or articles that discuss your costume (if available) or the era or style.
- Discuss changes you made and why.
- Tell briefly how you built the costume.
- Tell what you learned, and what is especially notable.

Our examples of this are:

- “Phantom of the Opera” – BayCon 2012, a regional convention.
- “Cardinal Richelieu” – Costume-Con 2015, a quirky mini-competition at a big convention.

Phantom of the Opera

This cover shows a pose from the only surviving color sequence in the 1925 film. The pose was deliberately included in the stage presentation. It also does a good job of showing the overall costume, the long train on the cloak, the walking stick and also impresses the red color on the judges' memories.

Masquerade – Phantom of the Opera

Presented by Philip Gust at the BayCon 2012 Historical Masquerade



This costume is based the one worn by Lon Chaney Sr. as Red Death in the only surviving Technicolor sequence, Masquerade, from the silent film version of "The Phantom of the Opera" (1925).

It is constructed of red velvet and satin and has sequined trim similar to the original costume. This is the first sewing project I have completed on my own. I made the staff prop carried by the character and the hat from buckram and velvet with a satin lining. The tights, shoes, teeth and both facial masks were purchased, but the wig was made for me at home by my partner. The make-up is my own, based on the photos from the film.

The foam latex full facial prosthetic used during performance is one of a limited number of copies created for the Universal Studios "Tribute to Lon Chaney Sr." in 2004, and is based on his Phantom character makeup.

Cardinal Richelieu

This is an example of getting lucky. I did not take any build photos of this costume, and later wanted to enter it in this competition. Fortunately, the theme was “make a costume out of curtains” and I had kept the packaging with the extra curtain fabric stored in it. Those package images appear on page 2 of the documentation.

Entry for “Miss Ellen’s Portieres” Competition

L’Eminence Rouge – Cardinal Richelieu

This costume was made for a local “Three Musketeers Ball”. Phil decided he would like to attend as an unlikely character and selected Cardinal Richelieu.

The design of the vestments worn by Cardinals today is essentially the same as that during Richelieu’s time. Vestments are worn by the clergy when they are “on duty”. They may wear other garments when not exercising their functions of ministry, but we are not certain what Richelieu wore off duty, or if he ever considered himself to be in that state. His portraits all show him to be in “Choir Dress”.



The vestments shown in paintings of Richelieu consist of:

- The Cassock – a full-length form fitting garment of scarlet watered silk (moiré) with 33 covered buttons symbolizing the 33 years of Christ's life on earth.
- The Rochet – a white long-sleeved garment that reaches below the knee and is elaborately decorated with lace and/or embroidery. This is the only garment that may vary in its design and intricacies. All others must be exactly the same for every cardinal.
- The Mozzetta – a scarlet elbow length capelet with 12 covered buttons for the 12 apostles.
- The Biretta or Zuchetto – either a scarlet square hat with ridges or a scarlet skull cap. There are paintings of the Cardinal wearing both styles, but he appears more frequently in the Zuchetto, so that is the one we chose

Category 4

This final category builds on Category 3.

- Add detailed sections to the back of your short Category 2.
- Give more detail on construction and decision making.
- Show how you built the costume step by step.
- Tell what you learned, and what is especially notable.
- List books, articles, patterns, website and anyone who helped you.
- I like to break this up by the different parts of the costume.
- The judges may not read all of this, but they may scan through it to get insight into your work.

Bilbo and The Rehearsal



<Fantasy-Science
Fiction

Historical >

The Rehearsal – March 18, 1782



Entrance Into Rome

At 37 pages, this is quite a big document, but it covers both costumes, the film, the various costumers, the weird hiatus in shooting the scene and some minor scandals.

However, the “must read” synopsis is only three pages long.



Costumes for the “Entrance into Rome” scene of the film *Cleopatra* (1963)

Costume-Con 33 Historical Masquerade

Charleston, South Carolina, 2015

Hints and Tips 1

- Take photos as you build.
- Save swatches, paint chips, etc.
- List any patterns or special materials you used.
- If you discovered a great hint or tip somewhere, list that and where.
- If you want to be sure you mention something, put it in.

Hints and Tips 2

- Put a memorable cover or coversheet on it.
- Put it in some type of binder.
- Try to have one copy for each judge that needs one.
- Keep a spare for yourself, in case you don't get them back.
- Take your copy to all judging sessions. You may want to use the photos to explain things.





Documentation Examples

- Assorted Documentation mentioned in the presentation
<http://www.celefinniel.net>
- An award-winning documentation of Cosplay of the Statue of Athena Parthenos.
<http://www.enclin.com/rae/athena/athena.htm>
- A Mariachi Charro costume. Notice the Bibliography / List of sources at the end.
<http://www.casamai.com/mariachi1.htm>
- Late 14th century Italian Woman's Gown entered for an SCA competition.
<http://clothingthepast.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/a-late-14th-century-italian-womans-gown-pennsic.pdf>
- Aurora Celeste's documentation
<http://www.dramaticthreads.com/search/label/Documentation>