

OZ 360

Interactive Project Remediation Proposal

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PROJECT SUMMARY

A new interactive theatre experience, Oz 360 will allow users to experience the entire story of Oz as told by the original classic film as well as the musical remediation *Wicked*. The experience would require constructing a custom-designed theatre, with several stages on which action could occur, allowing audience members to walk about to view different scenes at different angles. A large cast of actors would be employed to enact the stories of Oz, moving from stage to stage as necessary to perform events that occur in different areas of the Oz world. Viewers of the exhibit are allowed to move freely around, witnessing the story from whatever perspective they choose. By electing to watch some events and perhaps miss others taking place elsewhere, viewers organically construct their own narrative during one performance, which may be compounded and enhanced by repeated visits.

SIGNIFICANCE

The primary motivation behind Oz 360 is to revolutionize the concept of interactive theatre, a genre of entertainment that attempts to empower the audience and encourage taking control of one's experience. Previous attempts at interactive theatre have fallen somewhat flat, with the audience being reduced to screaming or clapping or waving their arms left and right in order to affect what happens on stage. This separation of actors and audience actually emphasizes the spectator's lack of control, rather than reducing it. It also brings about the dilemma of the majority's vote being more important than what each individual is interested in.

This is where the “three-hundred and sixty degree theatre” comes in. Instead of changing the action in front of an audience, viewers are immersed and surrounded by events and may move about freely in search of items of interest. This gives the viewer greater control of what they see, without having to modify the direction of the story at all. Allowing viewers to walk around a story challenges the traditional foundations of narrative, as each viewer is discovering their own version of the story based on what they choose to watch.

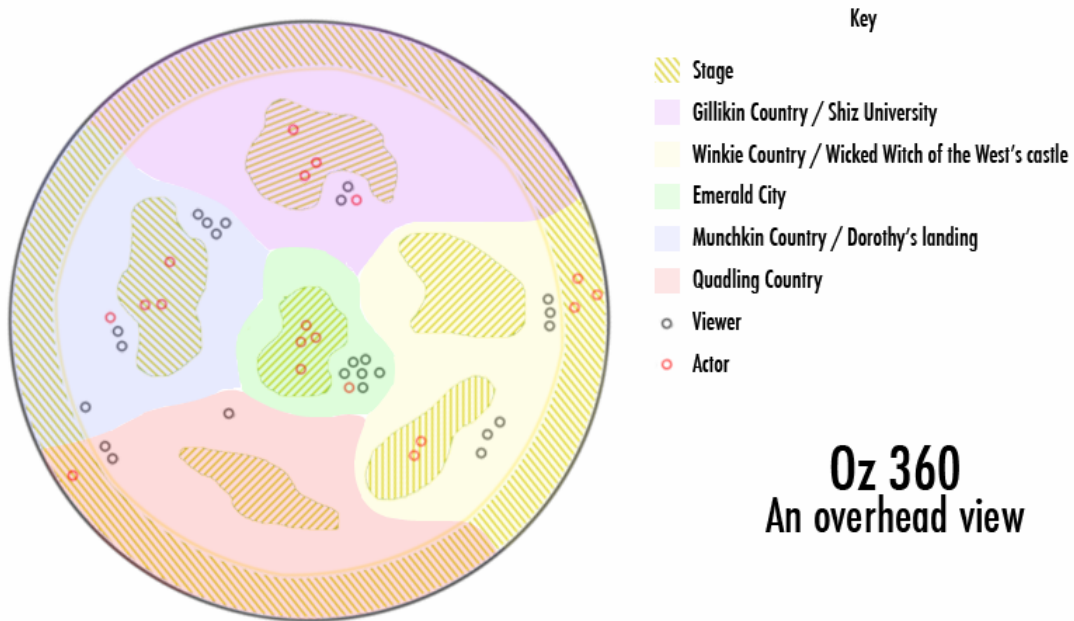
The concept of “framing” a shot, as in film, to emphasize something that the director believes is important will become completely obsolete, as each viewer becomes their own director. Viewers will be able to dynamically construct their own perspective of the overall story, allowing them to decide for themselves who the true heroes and villains are, and more than likely will experience a different version with each visit afterwards. Simultaneous narratives may also be experienced if a viewer were standing, for example, on the border of two scenes for two events taking place at the same time, between different characters.

EXHIBIT DESCRIPTION

Oz 360 is a theatre experience that requires the construction of a new kind of theatre. The interior is circular in shape, with a domed ceiling comparable to those found in planetariums. This would allow for different skies to be projected onto the ceiling, giving each region of the theatre the feel of a different time and place.

The theatre consists of several different “stages”, defined as platforms on which actors can be expected to stand for major numbers. Unlike the traditional stages found in today’s theatres, a 360 stage is much shorter in height, to decrease the

feeling of separation between the viewers and actors. Viewers will not be permitted from climbing onto these stages while an event is in progress. Specially trained actors will be integrated into regular audience. These actors will attempt to enhance the feeling of immersion by small talking with the audience while being “in character”, gossiping in reaction to the action that the spectator’s might be viewing, etc. Major characters, too, may be found wandering the non-stage areas while progressing to their next scene and may be open to audience interaction along the way.



Early concept of Oz 360

The theatre is split into five general regions for Oz 360, each representing a geographical region in the fictional world of Oz. Each region will be clearly designated by theatre lighting that should tint each area with its own unique feel. For example, the Emerald City should be flooded with green light and be easily distinguishable from the other regions as a result. The Winkie Country region,

where the Wicked Witch of the West's castle is located, should be tinted gray and grim, making it a stark contrast from the Emerald City's green gaiety. White spotlights will be used on major characters at all times, making them easy for audience members to find and follow around.

When a viewer chooses to attend the Oz 360 experience, they must purchase a show ticket, as with any regular theatre event. The entire experience may be about two to three hours long, including a ten-minute intermission. The participant enters the theatre and may roam around at will for the duration of the show, as previously described. The show may be repeated daily for different audiences. As with any theatre that is used for different productions, the 360 theatre may play host to more than just the Oz storyline and simply requires a period of building new sets and actor rehearsals before the new performing season begins.

PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

At any given time, the personal requirements consist of a large number of people who are responsible for making a production run smoothly throughout the performing season. The theatre staff is responsible for the upkeep of the theatre, including cleanup and janitorial duties as well as administrative details, such as selling and collecting tickets. A large body of actors is needed to perform in the actual experience, from major characters to an assortment of extras. A subset of these actors, also playing extras, must be trained in the proper protocol for interacting with audience members. Finally, a group of technically adept employees must be on hand at every show to run all things related to equipment, including lights, sound, and any other miscellaneous electronic items.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Phase I: est. one to two years

- Design of the 360 theatre. Consultation with architecture and construction companies to draw up functional blueprints.
- Construction of the 360 theatre.
- Write the Oz 360 script, including a coherent timeline of all events to be enacted.

Phase II: est. six months

- Supplement Oz 360 script with smaller event items. Finalize script.
- Conduct Oz 360 set design, based on major events in the script. Begin set construction.
- Oz 360 pre-production begins: hiring production staff, auditioning performers.
- Second phase of pre-production: rehearsals for actors, training for interaction with audience members, choreographing script

Phase III: est. length of performing season (more than one year)

- Performances of Oz 360 begin

BUDGET

- Construction of a new theatre ~ \$20 million
 - Pantages theatre cost \$1.25 million, restored for \$12 million
 - Cirque de Soleil's "O" theatre cost \$70 million

- Sets, costumes, lighting/technology
 - ~\$1000 for backdrops
 - ~\$6000 - \$10,000 for spotlights, etc.
 - <http://www.stagetechnology.com/catalog/main.cfm>

- Performer contracts ~ \$60,000 a week (cast of 40)
 - Minimum weekly salary for actors in Broadway productions as of June 30, 2005 was \$1,422

WORKS CITED

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