Concept Design with Shakespeare's AS YOU LIKE IT

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Exercise: Concept Design

(This exercise is related to design slam, but its agenda is different: to get to the essence of the students' imagined production—and in getting to the essence of the production, to understand the world of the play more deeply. While both exercises can accommodate different levels and learning styles, it is fair to say that Design Slam is better for younger students and Concept work more easily suited to older ones.)

Here's an example of working with *As You Like It* and concept exploration. Because AYLI has two very distinct environments, the court and the Forest of Arden, it could be very helpful to use an excerpt from a scene in each location.

- Have the group read-through Act II, sc i (Arden) and Act II, sc ii (Court).
- Divide the group into smaller groups (maybe split the groups between the court scene and the forest scene) and ask each group to find THE FACTS of the scene, which should include:
 - Imbedded stage directions (separate the ones specific to acting from the environmental ones)
 - o Imbedded props
 - Indications of time of day, place, season, any sensory information
 - You can include other basic facts if you think that's useful, including characters names,
 etc.
- Come back together and make a comprehensive list. Look at the info gathered for both places side by side.
- Ask the group to identify words in the scene that feel the most operative, juicy, or essential to
 the story of the scene. (Hint: could be words or phrases which are repeated, typically nouns or
 verbs). Make a master list of those, and, if there are a lot, have the group vote it down to the
 strongest 6.

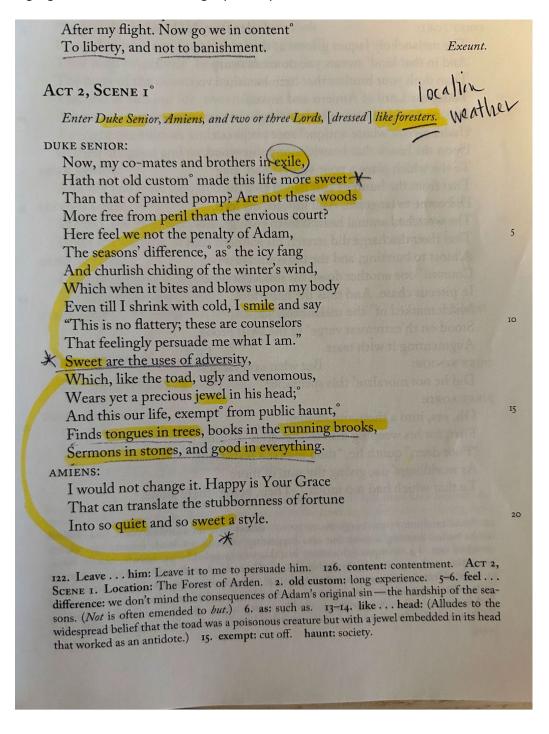
•	Ask the group to make a final list that uses their imaginations, filling in the phrases:	
	0	If this scene were a smell, it would be
	0	If this scene were a sound, it would be
	0	If this scene were an image, it would be

- Ask the group to land on one or two key ideas from this final list for each environment and use
 that as the launch for the scenes concepts. "This scene is going to be like a rotting peach in the
 sun"- non-literal, but based on text! And ripe (pun intended) for imaginative work for directors,
 actors, and designers.
- ADD ON: if you have the time and inclination, have the students divide into jobs (designers, actors, directors, etc.) and stage the scenes with this concept in mind. The primary question for each of them would be "How does this choice support our conceptual vision?"





Here is a page from each scene, as an example, with some keywords, images, and given circumstances highlighted or marked, including repeated phrases:







language of spirs
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ber, hierarch 52 | AS YOU LIKE IT FIRST LORD: I cannot hear of any that did see her. The ladies, her attendants of her chamber, Saw her abed, and in the morning early They found the bed untreasured of their mistress SECOND LORD: My lord, the roinish° clown, at whom so oft Your Grace was wont to laugh, is also missing. Hisperia, the princess' gentlewoman, Confesses that she secretly o'erheard Your daughter and her cousin much commend The parts° and graces of the wrestler That did but lately foil the sinewy Charles, And she believes wherever they are gone That youth is surely in their company. DUKE FREDERICK: Send to his brother. Fetch that gallant hither. If he° be absent, bring his brother° to me; I'll make him find him. Do this suddenly, And let not search and inquisition quail To bring again° these foolish runaways. ACT 2, SCENE 3° Enter Orlando and Adam, [meeting]. ORLANDO: Who's there? ADAM: What, my young master? Oh, my gentle master, Oh, my sweet master, oh, you memory° Of old Sir Rowland! Why, what make you° here? Why are you virtuous? Why do people love you? And wherefore are you gentle, strong, and valiant? Why would you be so fond to overcome



