

## **Mollie Cheek, Bio**

My name is Mollie Cheek, and I am a set and costume designer and fused glass artist. With a background in English literature and a master's in Design for Performance, I bring a unique blend of analytical and practical skills. Growing up in a family of artists has given me a broad understanding of, and appreciation for, different design mediums, which continues to inform and inspire my work.

I originally took a BA in English Literature at the University of York. While studying, I dedicated much of my time to designing sets and costumes for the university's drama society. This passion led me to do an art foundation at UCA, where I specialised in the fashion and textiles pathway, and graduated with distinction. During this year, I designed and made costumes, conceptual sets, and puppets, gaining valuable industry experience by creating puppets for 'CirCumBaba' theatre company and working as an assistant technician to sculptor Anne Carrington in Margate, where I developed my skills in working with mixed media.

My early career took root in Thanet, Kent, where I designed several productions at the Sarah Thorne Theatre, crafting the scenic art for all my shows. A notable project I am proud of in my local area, involved transforming a caravan into a jungle explorer's camp for Looping the Loop Theatre Company, utilising entirely recycled materials—a testament to my commitment to sustainable design practices.

My career then brought me to London, where I continued to grow as a designer and freelance as a scenic artist, working on a variety of projects while gaining hands-on experience as a dresser at the Royal Opera House. My dream is to keep designing sets and costumes for opera and learn to design for ballet, expanding my creative understanding of designing for movement. I also wish to gain experience working in film and TV, where I can use my scenic painting skills to contribute to dynamic art department teams.

When theatres closed due to the pandemic, I focused on my work as a glass artist, selling my glass paintings, homeware, and jewellery. I began my master's degree in Design for Performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and at the same time, I continued designing theatre shows, such as 'Wonderdrug' for Vaults Festival and the Irving Berlin musical 'Call Me Madam' at Upstairs at the Gatehouse London. I also had the opportunity to work as a production designer for a short film set in the Valleys for BBC Cymru and as a scenic artist at the Sherman Theatre in Wales. Further experience came from working as a dresser for the Welsh National Opera and as a scenic artist at Boomtown Festival, where I earned certifications for operating cherry pickers and scissor lifts.

My recent work includes serving as Head of Costume for the feature film promotion 'Metapop Star,' where I experimented with holographic materials to create a dance

costume that changes colour with movement—an idea inspired by my glass art. I also had the privilege of designing the baroque opera 'The Dragon of Wantley' for New Sussex Opera, set during the 1984 miners' strikes. This project involved costuming a community chorus of 20 alongside the four main soloists, capturing the spirit of the miners' community, and creating a 10-meter by 6-meter abstract painting as a backcloth for the production's tour.

In addition to my work as a designer, I have been assisting the esteemed costume designer Giulia Scrimieri on various projects. Currently, I am working on 'Le Timbre d'Argent' by Camille Saint-Saëns with New Sussex Opera, continuing my collaboration with director Paul Higgins and dramaturg Benjamin Poore.

If possible, I like to speak to the people whose stories and experiences I am sharing. My English degree honed my ability to conduct thorough research and analyse texts, something I am passionate about, and that enables me to delve into the intricacies of the stories I help to tell. My work as a designer, fused glass artist, and scenic artist are all deeply interconnected. I consider light and spectacle as essential in my glass art as they are in my performance design.

### **Contact Info**

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