

# Minutes of Association of Scenic Artists and Makers Sustainability Talk with Hilary Vernon-Smith –06/07/2021 7:30PM – 9PM.

## Summary:

Meeting hosted by Carla Mardle. There was a larger group in attendance, discussing products, recipes and greener working practices.

Carla introduced Hilary and talked about ASAM, how the group initially formed, what we had achieved so far and plans for the future.

Hilary spoke about the Theatre Design course she studied at Croydon College of Art and Design and the early days of her career working in the weekly repertory theatre. All the painting at college was done using size and up until the 1980's when PVA became cheaper and easier to use.

***Below are abridged notes for the meeting for the full video please follow the [link](#).  
Password for video: 6^QYCqD2***

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## Actions:

- To Please research and add any recommendations for products to the [Sustainable Scenic Art \(google doc\)](#) or please email [scenicassociation@gmail.com](mailto:scenicassociation@gmail.com) - If your working on a production using an alternative product and have come across any good products we want to know spread the word.
- **Call to anyone interested in Sustainability**, working on sustainable productions, would to join the sustainability group or helping develop the Scenic Art section of the Green book - **please email – [scenicassociation@gmail.com](mailto:scenicassociation@gmail.com) - Title - Sustainability**
- Check out the Second draft of the **Theatre Green Book** [here](#)
- **If you have any ideas for our next meeting** please email [scenicassociation@gmail.com](mailto:scenicassociation@gmail.com)

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## Points Raised:-

Cotton canvas not as green and sustainable due to the way cotton is grown, unbleached linen. Linen used to be used more and is much nicer to paint on.

Are dry pigments still around and easy to get hold of? They could be an alternative way of working.

Eco paints are expensive so would be good to look at different binders and pigments.

American's use casein to bind paints but this is not vegan as is a milk by product.

Central are trying to move away from Rosco paints next year and try to use more pigments, Mylands and Bristol paints, they are hoping to move the younger generation towards more greener products.

Hausmann paints are good quality use their own pigments and have a good range of colours.

Aniline dyes are banned but used to have great, vibrant colours which haven't been replaced by any of the newer water dyes that are currently available. Water based printing inks were mentioned and also looking at the products the fabric printing industry use as they also must come across the same issues.

Hilary and Sue Dunlop talked about some of the more harmful products that were previously used- asbestos as texture and told stories involving acetone and spraying aniline dyes and how health and safety is much better now.

Hilary used to use large sheets of lining paper on floor such as marbling, paper is wood pulp so it worked well with a good couple of coats of glaze, provided it doesn't get wet.

Starch(laundry starch?) can be used to prime cloths and is used by Rocket Scenery and was used on the Beauty and the Beast cloths. Would be worth researching.

**Size:**-Size is a waste product from the meat industry and was better in many ways than PVA. They used to wash the old scene off the flats and repaint it with the new design in the repertory theatre. Size was also used by the carpenters as glue.

Size was also used for texturing and could build up amazing textures with sawdust, felt and other materials.

Size stopped being used as scenic artists started working as freelancers in commercial workshops, it became less practical as you would need a gas ring for each colour. Size was also a slower way of working as you would need to test each of the colours.

**Further Reading and Info** -There is an old book called Materials of the Artist which has information about traditional pigments and binders- gum Arabic etc.

You can find the second draft of the Green Book [here](#) if you would like to be a part of these conversations please email [scenicassociation@gmail.com](mailto:scenicassociation@gmail.com)

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**Thank you for reading and please check the action points at the top of this document as to how you can get involved.**