



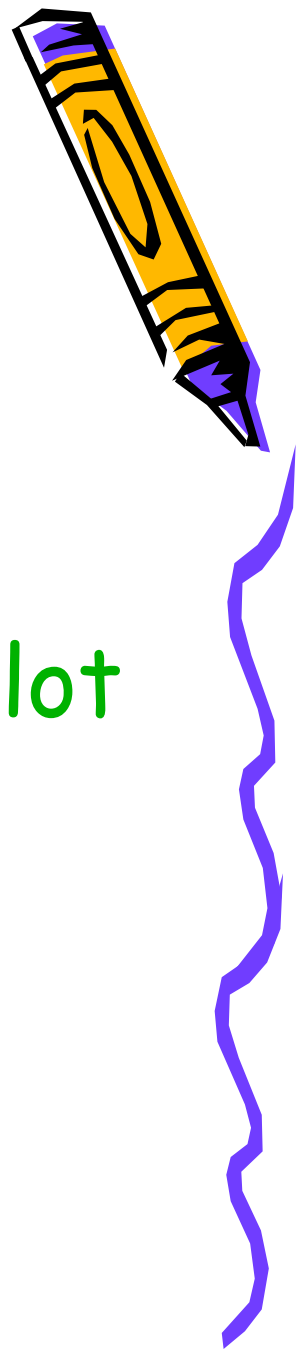
Designing Your Christmas Display

With content from Cindy Miller



Designing a Display

How to create a living world of characters and color by using your choice of materials and a lot of imagination.



Getting Started

Pick a theme

1. Certain centerpiece.

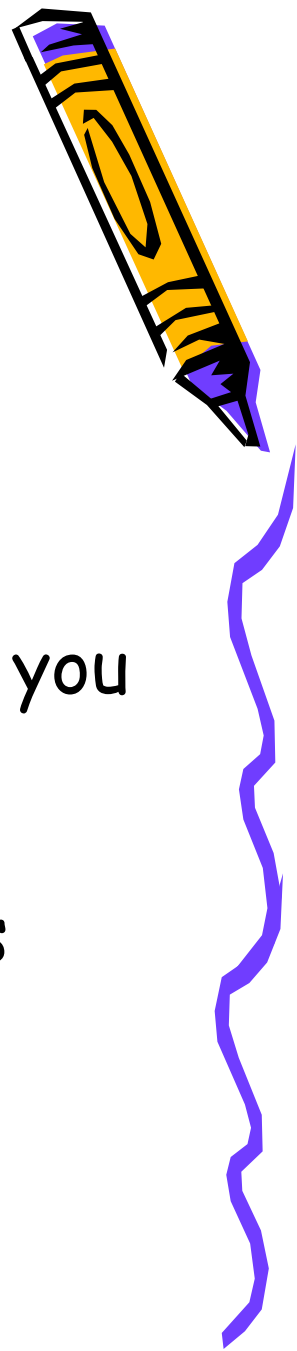
A centerpiece can be a wire frame, a large tree, a special blow mold, a village, or a computer controlled scene



Pick a theme cont.

2. Certain color/colors.

You may have certain colors that you really like or special colored lights that you really want to display. Some displays feature computer generated displays, and/or animated lighted shows. Others like static designs.



Pick a theme cont.

3. Particular place in the yard.

You may have a place in the yard that is bare and needs filling, a dark spot that needs lighting or a certain alcove that would accommodate a particular blowmold, inflatable, wire frame, or other design element.

You may want a small space to look big and a big space to look small.

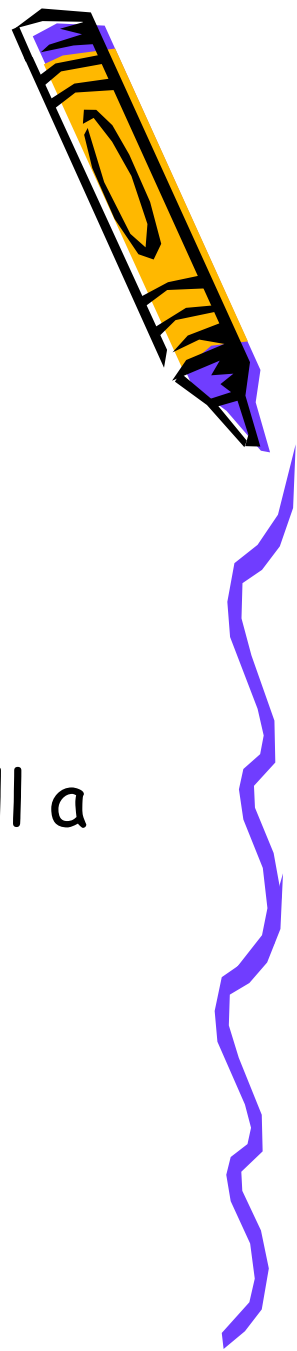


Pick a theme cont.

4. Convey a message, tell a story.

You may want to display a traditional, religious, comical, ethnic, whimsical, holiday scene, or dramatic scene.

Some people want their display to tell a story, others want to just impress the crowd with their lighting theatrics.

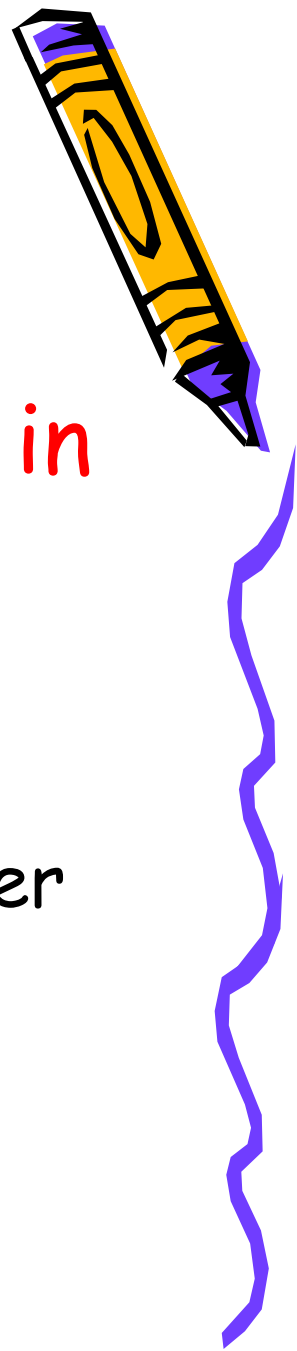


Picking out the pieces

Decide what pieces you will use in your display.

1. Using all wire frames.

When using wire frames keep the theme consistent. Do not introduce other designs unless they fit. Keep the wire frames together that tell the story.



Decide what pieces cont.

2. Using all blowmolds.

When using blowmolds be sure they go together. They can be used with many different props. Choose a variety of sizes within reason to give depth to your design.

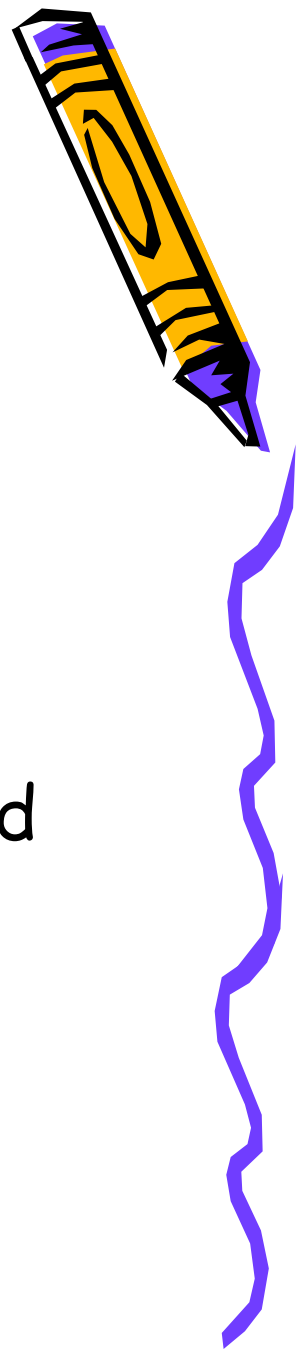


Decide what pieces cont.

3. Using cut-outs.

Cut-outs are made in a multitude of designs. Their expressions can tell wonderful stories.

They can be used with other props and enhanced by flood lights. Lights can be attached to their surface for enhancement.

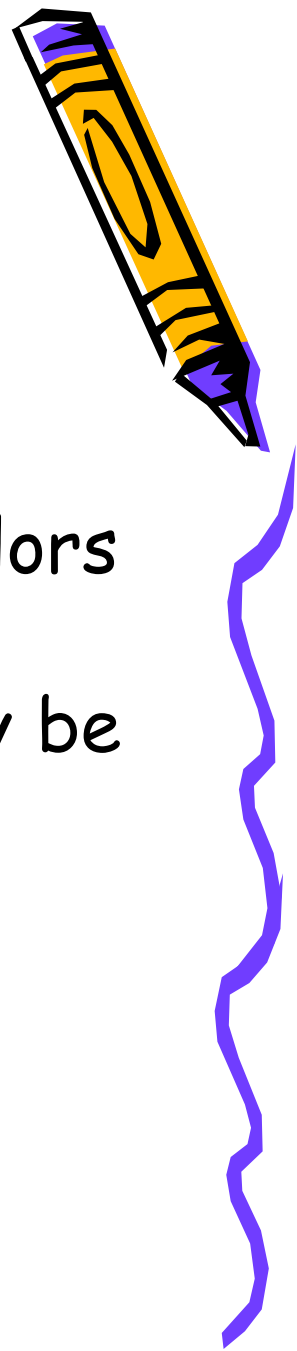


Decide what pieces cont.

4. Using nothing but lights.

Lights can be used in a multitude of colors and shapes. Colors can be mixed and matched or a dominant color theme may be your choice.

By attaching them to fences, houses, shrubs, trees the designs are endless.



Decide what pieces cont.

5. Using a combination of these techniques.

A combination of all these can be used but use common sense when putting some things with others. Look for a realistic effect.

Remember, no theme is wrong, but some ideas are work better than others.

Experiment in trying new ways of expressing yourself.



Finding a place to put it.

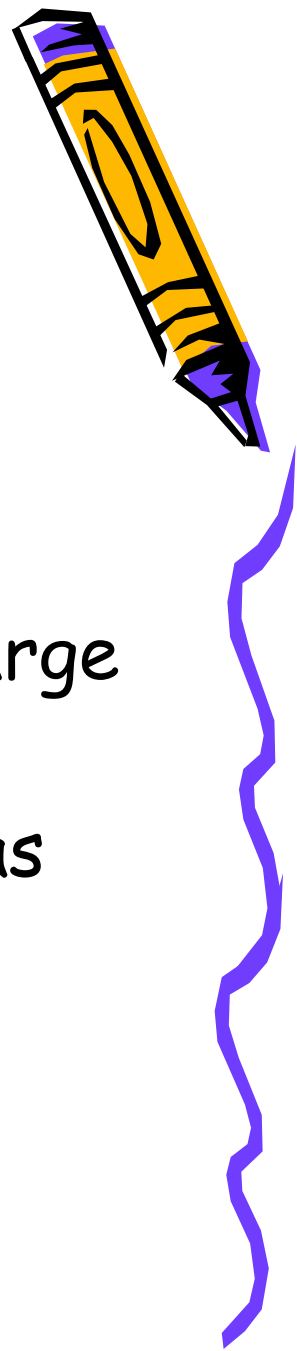
After picking a theme, and deciding what pieces you will use in the theme, decide where it will look best in your allotted space.



Finding a place cont.

1. Do you have a lot of room?

If you are fortunate enough to have plenty of room you can spread out one large design or several smaller designs into venues. The displays can be as diverse as you like when separating them into individual scenes.



Finding a place cont.

2. Do you have a small amount of room?

If your room is limited, display the pieces in critical areas so that you get the most impact for the least amount of space.

Think of expanding not only left to right but back and forward and up and down. Use all available space.

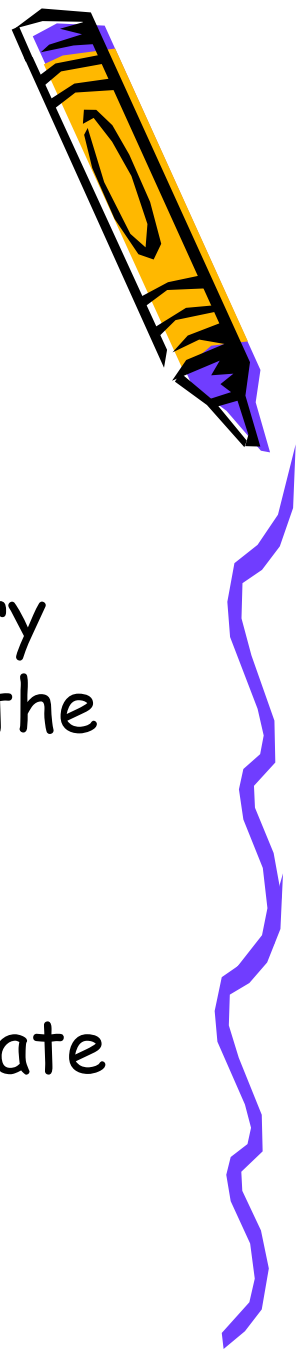


Finding a place cont.

3. Will you have a lot of different display scenes or just one?

If you have many different scenes try not to jam them together. This causes the displays to look run together. Use some sort of

barrier if you need to put them in close proximity to each other. This will separate the scenes into individual venues.



Putting It All Together



1. Put your key pieces where you want them, then build around them.

Location, Location, Location. Choose the best place for your center of attraction to allow for the best visibility, then place the rest of your pieces to complete the story.



Putting it all together cont.

2. Place things in a staggered position or layered appearance to allow for depth perception.

Depending on what you want your display to say, place the characters accordingly to give that illusion.



Putting it all together cont.

3. Moving a piece one or more feet can make all the difference in it's appearance and what it is relaying in the scheme of things.

In order for the scene to come alive you need to think of personal spacing between the characters and their surroundings.



Putting it all together cont.

You have chosen a theme, found your key pieces, and chosen your location.

Now Create!



Last Minute Pointers



- Remember! Never throw anything away.
- In putting your scene together that odd piece may be just what you need.



Pointers cont.



- The heavy duty plastic houses for small children make excellent houses for display items. They give a more realistic look.
- Attach a string of lights to the roof. Put a light bulb inside to high-light an inside scene.



Pointers cont.



- Attach a chimney and have smoke coming out of it or build smoke onto the fake chimney itself.
- Small baby dolls, Santa's, elves, trees, any of these things can go inside.

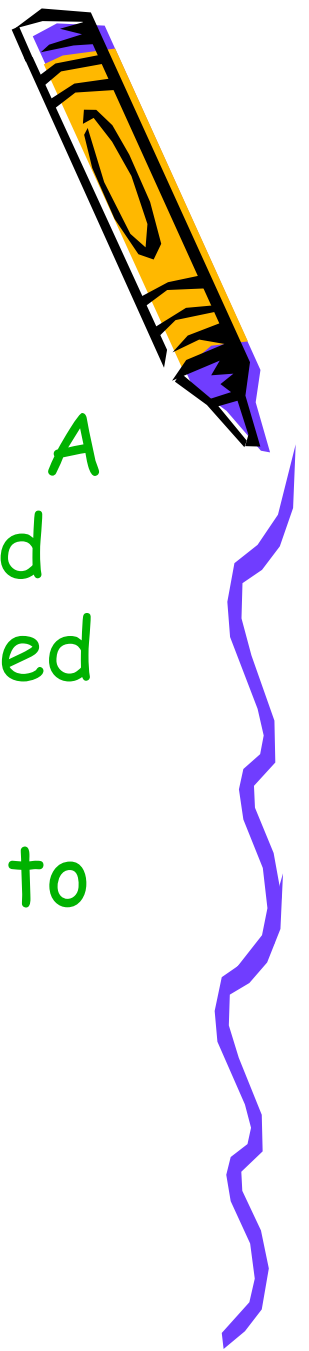


Pointers cont.

- If you prefer a specific, more personal look to your houses, build them from some of the materials we have already mentioned and paint them to fit. This not only makes them match what you want, but will protect the materials for a longer use.



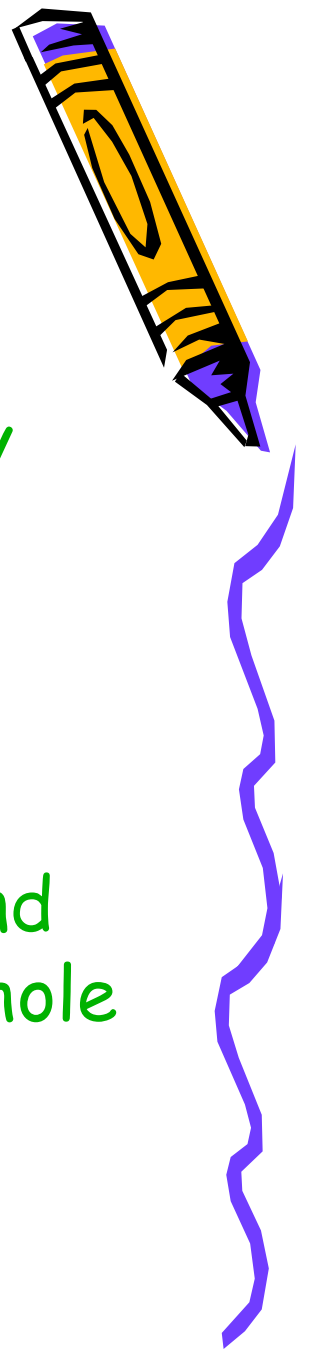
Pointers cont.



- Use Styrofoam to make snowballs. A little hot glue and you have a mound of snowballs to place where you need them.
- Glue one to a blowmold or figurine to tie a snow scene together.



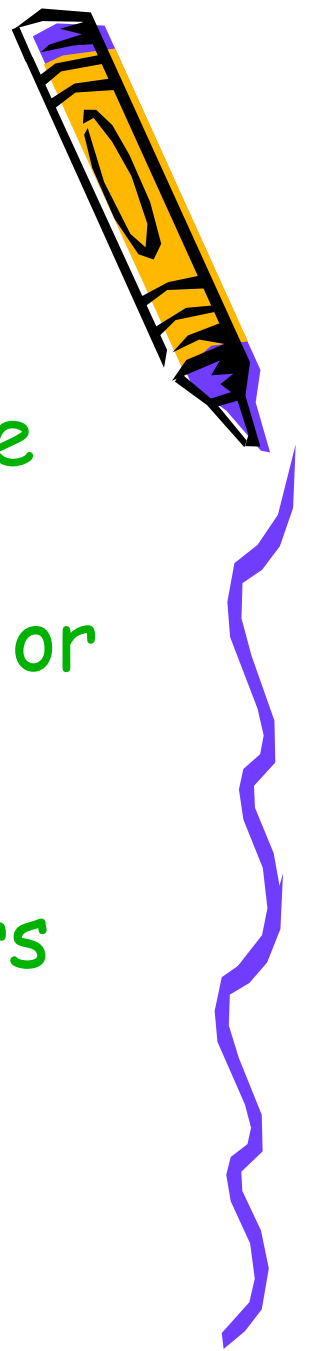
Pointers cont.



- If a blowmold is missing something they were holding, put something else in its place.
- **Ex:** A fishing pole in the hole where a candy cane went on a penguin. Make a lolly-pop out of a wooden rod and a round piece of Styrofoam and place it in the hole of a teddy bear.



Pointers cont.



- Put a poinsettia bouquet in the hole in the hand of a snowman/woman.
- Place action figure wire frames on or near appropriate things that are already in your yard.
- **EX:** Penguins down slides- reindeers lifting off the roof.



Pointers cont.

- Buy cheap garden fencing during the summer and use it to make a yard in front of your houses or outline a pond.
- This same fencing can be used to line a pathway for walking through your scene.



Pointers cont.

- Flower pot containers turned upside down can be used to elevate a prop. Use the hole in the middle to put a rod in so you can secure your prop.
- A blowmold fits nicely over the rods. Wire frames can be secured to the rods for stability.



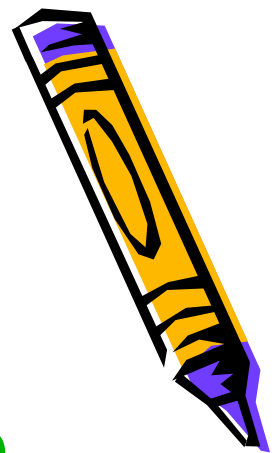
Pointers cont.



- Flower pot containers can be used to hold artificial trees or real ones. Decorate established topiary.
- Put these on each side of a doorway to create a bright and cheerful welcoming to your entrance.



Pointers cont.

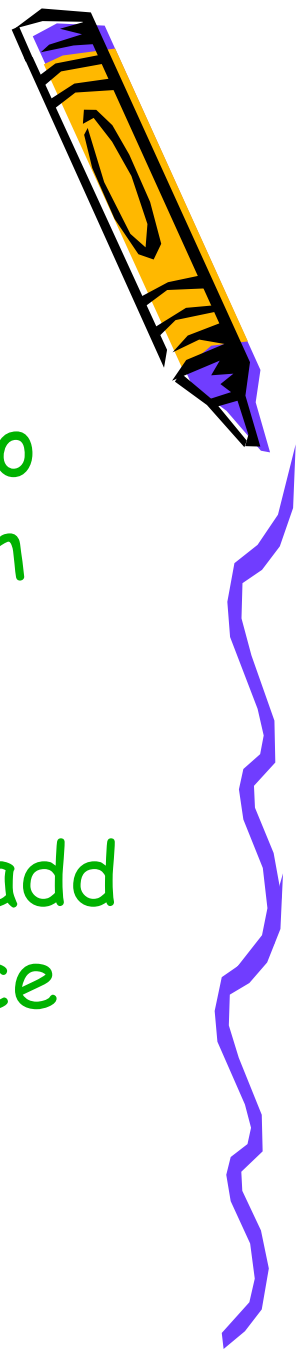


- Use large plastic ball ornaments to hang in your trees.
- During the summer purchase beach balls and paint them to look like ornaments. Hang these in the trees. They are much lighter and will move more easily in the breeze.



Pointers cont.

- Change the bulbs on wire frames to help differentiate body parts from clothes and objects in hands from the hands etc.
- Change the color of blowmolds or add designs to their clothing or enhance their facial features.



Pointers cont.



- If you have a very large pine tree in your yard place several inflatables around it to create a scene.
- Purchase inflatables that can be put together so you can make a larger display. Or make many single venues.



Pointers cont.



- Preplan your display. This cuts down on preparation time.
- Always double your assembly time. Things come up and you will add, take away or change a scene at least once.
- Mark all your power cords as to length and where they go for easy assembly.



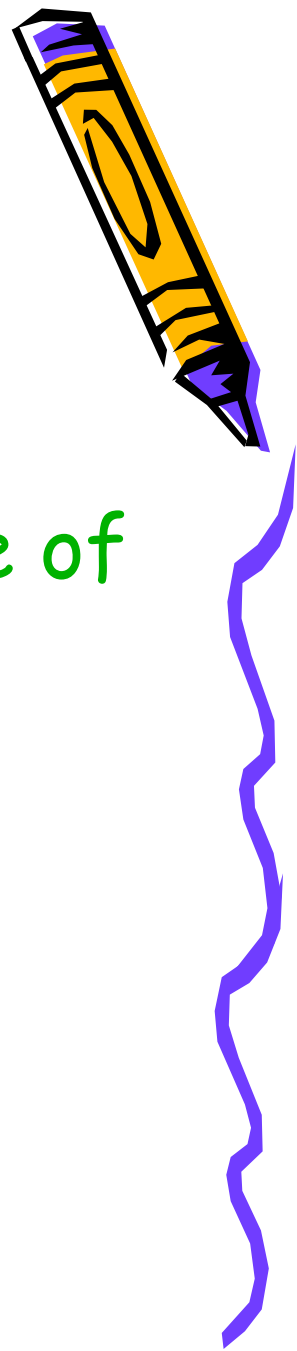
Pointers cont.



- Allow for weather variances. Not all of us live in the same climate.
- Colder climates will have to start preparation earlier and take display items down later.
- Large snow drifts can hide the smaller pieces in a display. Plan for that in your design.



Pointers cont.



- Warmer climates may allow you to incorporate a whole different type of Christmas theme. (Palm trees, flamingos, etc.)
- Secure displays on roof tops. Remember, what goes up can come down!



Pointers cont.

- Security is a very important consideration to plan for in creating your display.
- Consider the use of security cameras, fences, perimeter chains, lighting, alarms, signs, etc.



It's Your Master Piece



- There are no right or wrong displays.
- Each person expresses themselves in their own way.
- Just remember there are techniques that will make your display look more themed, which will set yours apart from all the others out there.
 - Now go out there and have fun!

