



Mielziner: Master of Modern Stage Design

By Mary Henderson

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Jo Mielziner (1901-1976) was an acclaimed scenic designer of the American theatre. Over five decades his career spanned the flowering of the modern theatre in the USA, and he designed many of its most famous productions, including "A Streetcar Named Desire", "Death of a Salesman", "Guys and Dolls" and "Carousel". He worked with a roster of great playwrights, directors and producers on a staggering total of 260 shows, many of them theatrical premieres, but also including ballets, operas and motion pictures. He pioneered many concepts of design - such as the capturing of a visual metaphor for the production -that are taken for granted today. His influence for succeeding generations has been enormous. This study covers his life and work and is illustrated with sketches and fully-rendered designs.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Every once in a while a book comes along that is both beautiful and informative, and this gorgeous book on the great stage designer, Jo Mielziner, is one of them. Mielziner is considered one of the greatest (perhaps the greatest) set designers of all time. He designed the original sets for *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *Carousel* and operas such as *Don Giovanni*. This book covers his entire career, bringing the reader into the golden world of Broadway at a time when it really was a place of magic and divine inspiration. The 140 color photos are marvelous, though one wishes for more of the larger pictures (economics, surely; the \$45 price tag is a bargain). Henderson, a journalist and theater historian of international reputation, has written a fascinating text, with background details that offer insights into this crazy world. Highly recommended for all academic art and theater collections and public libraries with patron interest. Susan L. Peters, Univ. of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston
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From [Booklist](#)

For more than 50 years, from 1925 to 1976, stage designer Jo Mielziner was a force to be reckoned with on Broadway and beyond. Part of a generation that took the radical design and lighting ideas of Gordon Craig and Adolph Appia and made them their own, Mielziner designed sets for the premier productions of many of the plays we now consider modern American classics, including *A Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Death of a Salesman*. An amazingly prolific designer, Mielziner also made his mark on American musical theater, designing shows as different as *South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Gypsy*. This glossy, lavishly illustrated, oversize book presents hundreds of Mielziner's designs and drawings, many in color, documenting the full arc of his career, from '20s work with the Theatre Guild to his final projects, assisting the design of new theaters throughout America. The fine illustrations are accompanied by Henderson's exhaustively researched, somewhat dry biography of the designer. *Jack Helbig*
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About the Author

Mary C. Henderson, a Guggenheim fellow, member of the Tony Award committee, and a journalist and lecturer, is also the author of *Theater in America*. She lives in Congers, New York.

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