

**COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AWARD**  
***SET DESIGN BY ANDREW COLE***

For this project i was briefed with designing and constructing a set for the 4th year acting for stage and screen students final show ‘Scuttlers, by Rona Munro’.

I had 8 weeks to fully design and construct the set.

Working With a tight budget and time, the deisgn process had to be quick and effective as i had to leave enough time to build the full set.

The goal was to immerse the audience without being too literal and create more of an abstraction of the enviroment the performance was set in.

Working closely with the director, co director, stage manager, costume designer and the actors played a vital role in the outcome of this project and was essential for its resolution.

**SCUTTLERS**

***BY RONA MUNRO***

***Overview:***

“**Scuttlers**” is a play by Scottish playwright Rona Munro, first performed in 2015 at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester. It explores themes of gang culture, identity, loyalty, and industrial change, set in late 19th-century Manchester during a time of rapid urbanization and social upheaval.

***Setting:***

1895, Ancoats, Manchester – a gritty, industrial working-class district.

***Historical Basis:***

The play is inspired by real-life youth gangs known as the Scuttlers, who roamed the streets of Manchester in the late 1800s. They were precursors to modern street gangs, often identified by their distinct clothing and territorial disputes.

***Plot:***

The story centers on rival gangs, particularly the Bengal Street gang, and follows their internal dynamics, rivalries, and personal conflicts. As tensions rise, the characters must navigate issues of loyalty, ambition, love, and t





RESEARCH

I started this process by reading the script front to back and highlighting any discriptors of the settings in the script.. this was extremelty helpful and gave me a good idea of what i wanted the set to look like.

but before i started on the designing i needed to do some research into who the scuttlers were, and more importantly how and where they lived.

"A Scuttler was a gang member. The term 'Scuttler' was devised by young people who were taking part in gang conflicts but it was passed on to the magistrates at some of the early trials of gang members and at that point the local press became very interested in both the new term and what looked like a new and very dangerous pastime."

The living conditions were beyond awful, everthing had a thick layer of black suit on it due to the amount of coal being burned to sustain factory production



LOCATIONS

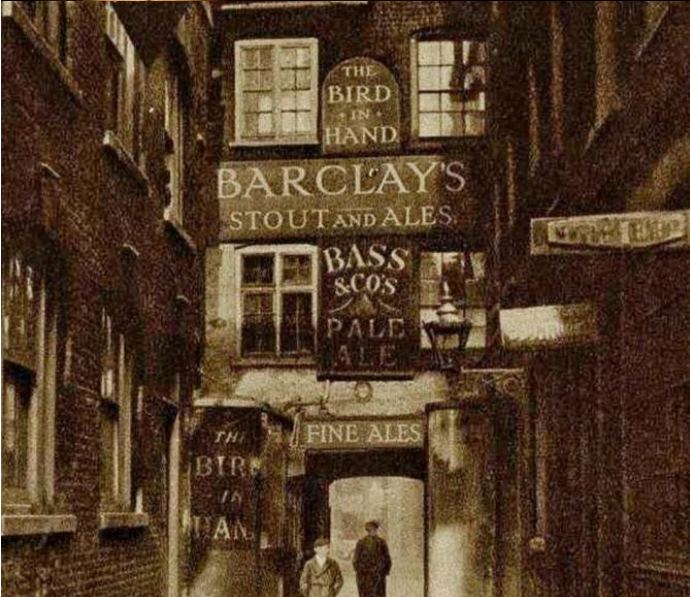
*As mentioned in the script (in order)*

ACT 1

- THE STREET
- THE LODGING HOUSE
- THE MILL OR STREET
- JERSEY STREET (MORNING) (BRIDGE)
- THE STREET (EVENING)
- PRUSSIA STREET (EVENING)
- JERSEY STREET (EVENING)
- PRUSSIA STREET (EVENING)
- THE STREET (EVENING)
- PRUSSIA STREET (NIGHT) (BRIDGE)
- THE LODGING HOUSE (THERESAS BED)

ACT 2

- THE STREET (NIGHT)
- THE ANCOATS DISPENSARY
- THE STREET (NIGHT)
- PRUSSIA STREET (NIGHT)
- THE STREET (DAWN) + THE DISPENSARY + PRISON CELL
- STREET
- PRISON
- STREET
- PRISON
- STREET (DAY)
- END.



DEVELOPMENT

In my first meeting with the director We spoke about what he would like to see for the play.

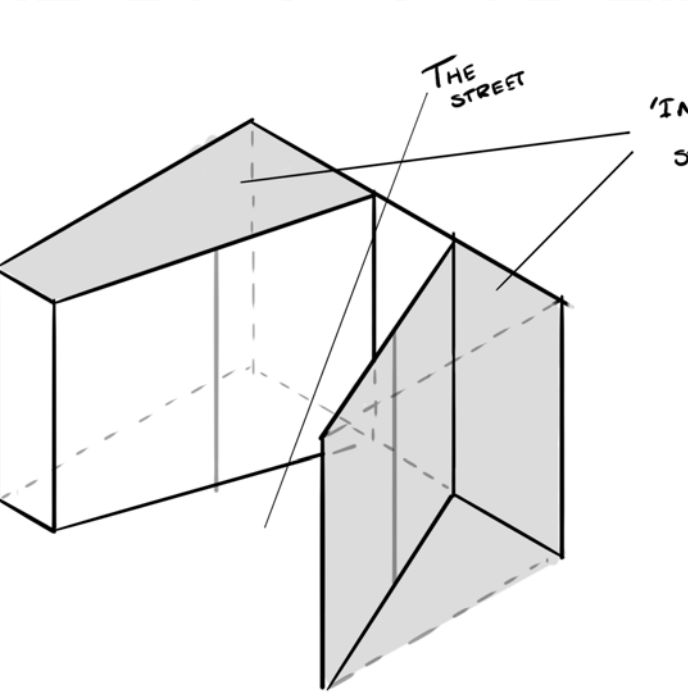
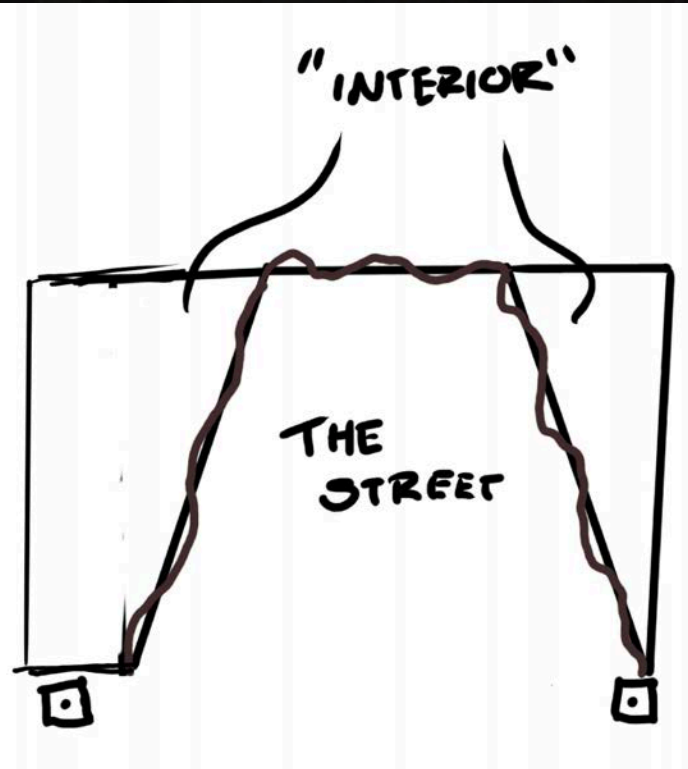
The scuttlers worked in cotton mills so we thought fabric would be very relevant to the play.

There were already old fabric dust cloths that could be repurposed for the show.

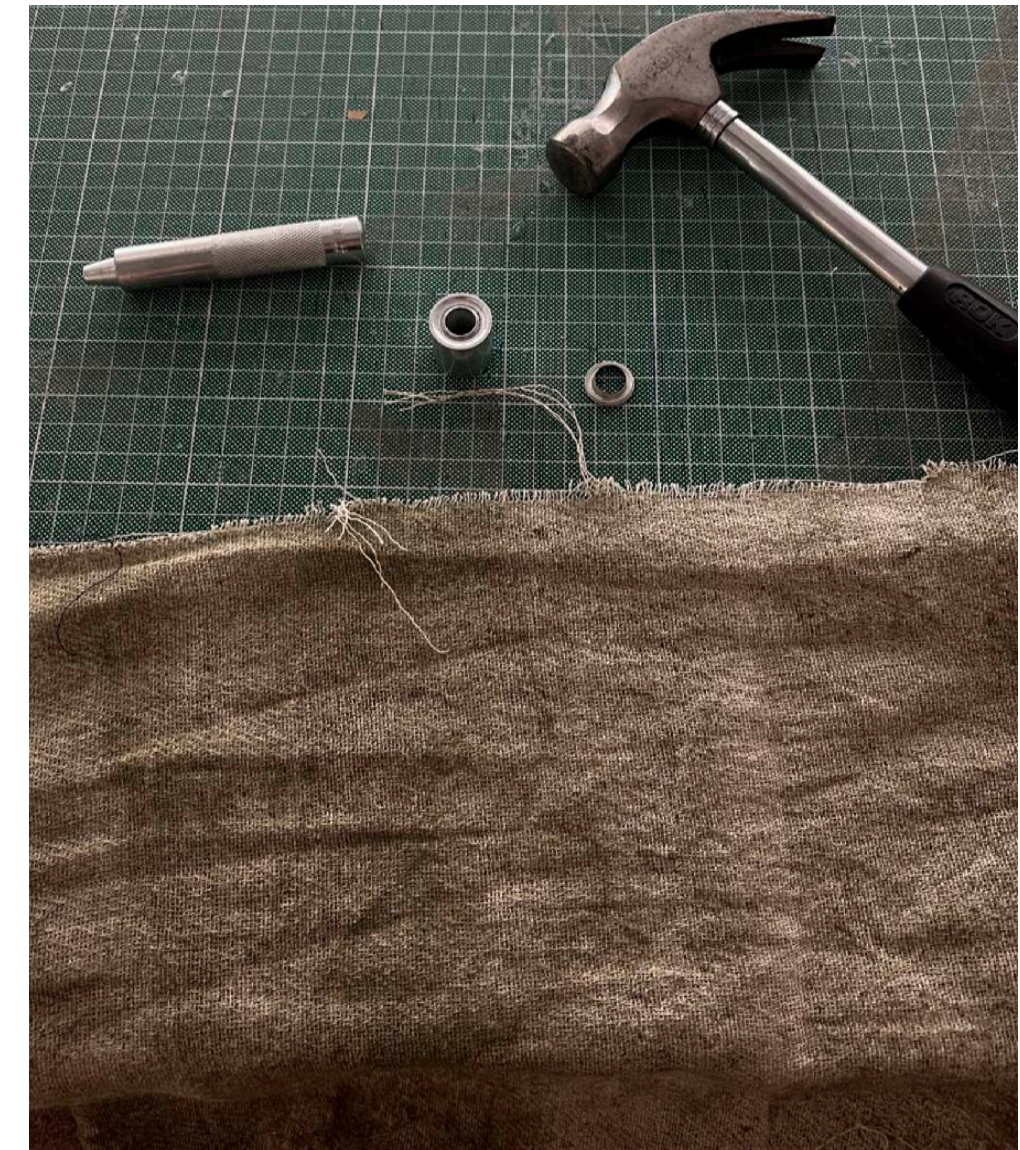
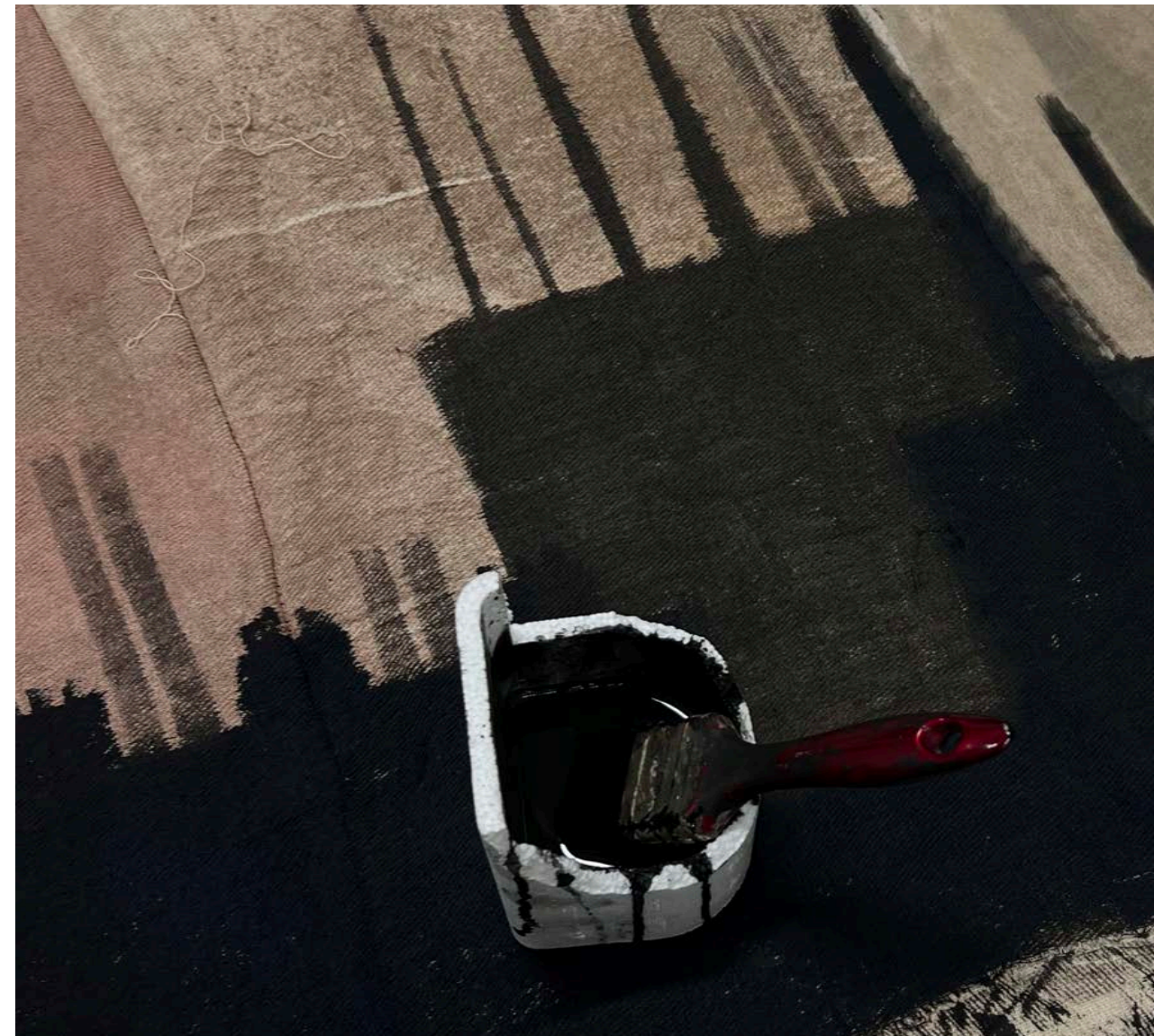
I suggested the idea of using shadows in scenes throughout the play, as somepoints in the scrip had mutiple things happening at once.

at first I suggested just a flat back-drop but after further development We opted for angled curtains that envelop the room crated a false perspective for the audience.

Now that my design was finalised it was time to start making it.







## 1. DISTRESSING AND STAINING

To achieve the distressed and stained look I used a spray bottle with diluted water-based craft paint and a sponge. I used varying colour types and undertones to create as much texture as possible.

## 2. SEWING

After distressing the fabric, I then had to cut the sheets of fabric into equal-sized rectangles. This would ensure each curtain I created would be completely unique.

## 3. ADDING THE FACTORIES

I knew I wanted to create more depth to the curtains and more context of the location of the play. I did this by painting a trim of different factories and chimney stacks like you would see in Ancoats in the 1880s.

## 4. EYELETS

In order for us to be able to hang the curtains, eyelets were needed.

After they were added, the curtains were ready to hang!





## SHADOW WORK

The very last part of the show is split scened, meaning that it takes place in two different locations at the same time.

for this we used shadows.  
i added a less opaic fabric  
to the back curtain to allow  
shadows to be cast on it.

