

Indecent Design Approach

“From ashes they rise” to “returns to dust”. A memory is left behind, in the grains of sand in the floorboards, in a melody floating on the breeze. This memory comes alive in song and dance and cheers, then ultimately dissolves again in unbelievable tragedy. This production’s direction focuses on what is left behind when a people are gone. The set is a wall of clothes: old, gray, worn, but long untouched. How long has it been? Here we investigate what was left behind, what was lost, and what we should never let go of.

Indecent traditionally only uses projection for title and subtitles, so as I explored what else the projection could provide, text became the unifying element. The story centers around Sholem Asch, a playwright who begins passionate and bold but eventually becomes anxious and reclusive as he senses the approaching violence and persecution. His writing appears on the walls around him, first presenting his exciting new draft, then showing more scribbles and scratches as he progressively loses focus. The text of his play, *The God of Vengeance*, and its translation from English to Yiddish is a key turning point in the assimilation of the theater troupe in America. The script of this play appears around the troupe as it is performed, first in its original Yiddish with clean geometric typography, then later in English, weaker and offset, somehow untrue. It only reaches its full vibrancy when Asch closes his eyes and sees the girls of his play, pure in their love and far from the devastation surrounding him, and the words gently expand around them.

The projection design required a focus on restraint, carefully choosing which moments to punctuate and keeping within the strict boundaries of the visual aesthetic, as well as cultural authenticity, thoroughly researched and accurate to the real historical truths. This design reaches out to the audience and gently pulls them in, allowing the hard truths of the story to be felt even more deeply.