

# COSTUME DESIGN

## *The Firebird*

### Costume Design for The Firebird Ballet:

The heroic Prince Ivan. The wicked and immortal sorcerer Koschei. The radiant and powerful Firebird herself. Since Stravinsky's *The Firebird* ballet was first performed in 1910 at the Opéra de Paris, these iconic characters have been redesigned and reimagined countless times, brought to vivid life through the designs of costumers all over the world. Some of the most iconic are pictured below. In this activity, imagine you are the costume designer for a new production of *The Firebird*. Choose one character and go through your design process from start to finish: find inspiration images, sketch out concepts, and arrive at a final design!



**Leon Bakst,  
1910,  
Costume Design  
*The Firebird***



**Marc Chagall,  
1945, Costume Design  
*The Firebird*:  
Blue-and-Yellow  
Monster from Koschei's  
Palace Guard**

### Materials Needed:

A means of looking through and saving images (anything from cutting out images from a magazine to pinning ideas to a Pinterest board), blank paper, and something to draw with (preferably both a pencil for sketching and crayons/ markers/ colored pencils for your final design).

### Directions:

#### Step 1: Choose a Character and Get Started

- For each new design, a costume designer starts with two things: their knowledge of the character who will be wearing the costume, and the director's vision, or concept, for the show. We'll start by picking a character. *The Firebird* takes place in an enchanted forest and a sorcerer's kingdom, worlds full of fantastical characters begging their own glorious costume designs. Here are three to choose between:
  - The Firebird: half bird, half woman, fierce, majestic, and in possession of a magic feather
  - Prince Ivan: a young hero, brave and generous, in love with a princess under Koschei the Immortal's spell
  - Koschei: an evil sorcerer who keeps his soul trapped in a magic egg hidden in a casket
  - Or... make up your own character for the ballet!

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### Step 2: Choose a Vision and Get Inspired!

- Choose a director's vision for your production. Three are provided below:
  - This classic production of *The Firebird* that will stay true to the original folktales that inspired the 1910 production. I am looking for designs that are simple, yet beautiful, and bring to life the world of the enchanted forest.
  - This cutting-edge production of *The Firebird* is a modern twist on the classic. Instead of in the forest, we find ourselves by the pool at a fancy island resort, run by a slimy business tycoon, the immortal Koschei. The Firebird, a resort entertainer, offers her aid to honored guest Prince Ivan after he discovers Koschei's shady dealings.
  - This abstract production of *The Firebird* takes place in a forest of the imagination. Audiences will feel as if they have fallen asleep and stepped into a dream: vivid, explosive, and full of color and texture. I am less concerned with your literal interpretation of the characters, and more interested in how you can surprise and delight me with your designs!
  - Or... make up your own director's vision statement!

### Step 3: Images for Inspiration

- Once you have chosen a character and a vision, search for images that can inspire your design! Look for colors, shapes, patterns, and textures you might include in your design. Collage them together digitally or on paper.

### Step 4: Sketch your ideas!

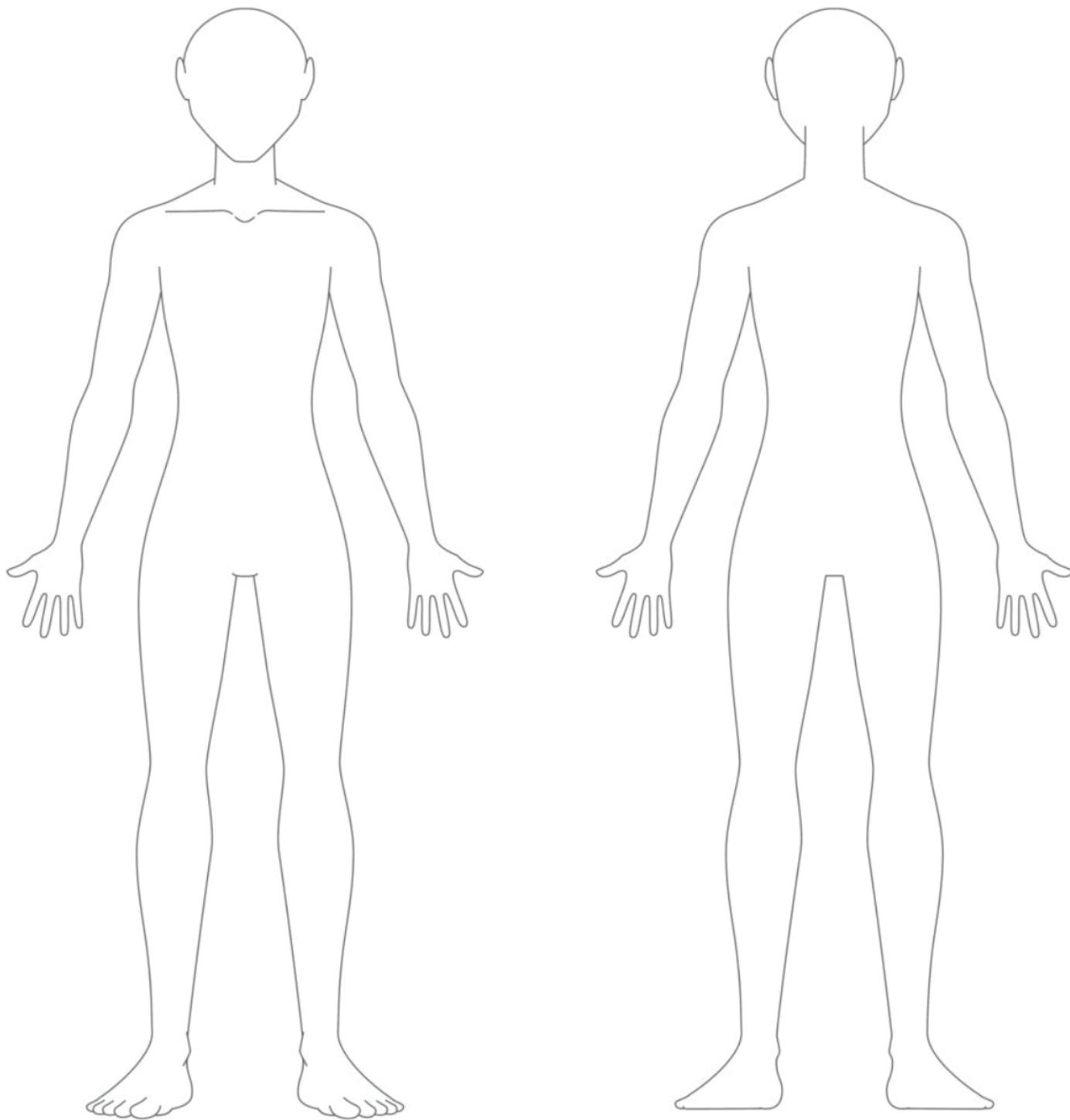
- Using a pencil and paper or a digital design tool, draw your first draft (or drafts) of your costume. Don't worry too much about getting things right the first time—keep your ideas flowing and surprise yourself! You may choose to draw your design on the outlined figures provided below.

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Step 4: Figures



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## Step 5: Finalize Your Design

- After you're done experimenting, use markers, crayons, paints, or colored pencils to create your final costume design. Design in hand, look back at the director's vision that inspired your artwork. How does it compare to your design? Would your director be satisfied, or might they ask for modifications? Make these changes, or not, as you see fit.

## Closing:

Share your final design with family and friends. Display it in a prominent location in your home. Celebrate your achievement!

## Bonus:

Repeat this activity as many times as interests you, choosing different combinations of characters and directors' visions. See how wildly different your designs become when working with different visions and inspirations!