

FRONT

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DURHAM'S LUMIERE | PTOLEMY MANN | ORIGIN | TERENCE CONRAN | LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL

How a paper artist
came to design theatre
sets this Christmas

Once upon a time...

With this being our Christmas edition we thought it might be a nice idea if we recommended a festive show. And we rather like the look of *The Snow Queen*, which will be showing at the Rose Theatre in Kingston, London from 2 December – 8 January. The play will be the theatre's thirteenth home-grown production since it opened in 2008.

However, what really piqued our interest is that the set is being created by *Crafts* favourite Su Blackwell. 'The theatre's artistic director Stephen Unwin was looking for a designer,' recalls the paper artist. 'He was looking at images online, and he came across my work and sent me an email.' From there a relationship blossomed.

Blackwell, who is also currently illustrating a new book of fairy tales (to be published next year), had never worked in the theatre before and confesses the project presented several challenges: 'We were given the scripts to read through, and then there were lots of meetings and talking and ideas got thrown back and forth, and things got changed. Essentially it's my signature style, but it's quite restrictive designing for the Rose because it's a theatre in the round. It took some working out how to re-use the sets and turns things around. There are numerous scenes, so it's quite a complicated thing to design.'

To our minds the meeting of Blackwell's delicate, lyrical imagery with Hans Christian Andersen's timeless story sounds like the perfect family treat. *'The Snow Queen'* runs at the Rose Theatre, Kingston upon Thames, from 2 December 2011 – 8 January 2012. www.rosetheatrekingston.org

