Stage Drapery 101
Fabrics, Styles and Descriptions

Theater drapes and stage curtains are designed to mask backstage areas of a theater from spectators. They have many purposes and are made in a variety of fabrics and styles. Whether you need drapes for your church, theatre, high school, studio, or dance hall, there are many options to consider. In addition to the aesthetic appeal, theatrical drapes can also help with the acoustics of a room. Fabric, style, and purpose all play a part when choosing new drapes for your space.

Ontario Staging Limited was established in 1987 to meet the growing demands of the theatrical and television industry. The company’s main focus involves the manufacturing and the installation of drapes, rigging, and staging equipment. Ontario Staging Limited also has a rental department stocking drapes, track, platforms and assorted lighting equipment. OSL is a dealer for Rosco Laboratories, Lee Filters, Alvin Clamps, Kee Klamps, H & H Track Systems, JB Martin Velour & KM Fabrics. Visit our showroom to pick up fabric samples and/or product literature relevant to your needs.

Our Commitment: Ontario Staging is committed to supplying the best products and services and keeping abreast of the rapidly changing technologies and innovations in the entertainment world. We convey this information to our customers through our designs, products and educational seminars to make our industry safer and exciting.
Theatrical & Film Fabrics

Whether in need of a custom made drape, or just a few yards, a large variety of theatrical and film fabrics are stocked in house. All drapes are manufactured in our facility to guarantee the utmost quality in workmanship.

Canvas
100% cotton, 12 oz canvas is non treated and generally used for floor cloths and can be painted. Available in 6', 10' and 12' widths.

Chromakey
Inherently flame retardant at 60" and 72", this polyester fabric is available in blue or green and works specifically with chromakey camera systems.

Commando
An inexpensive cotton, commando cloth is mainly used for masking requirements such as legs and borders, or covering flats. Commando cloth is typically 54" wide, flame retardant, and available in black, grey, red, blue and white in 12 oz. Heavy commando (16 oz), also known as duvetine, is great for complete black out situations and also stocked in 118" width.

Digital
Inherently flame retardant at 72", this polyester fabric is available in digital blue or green and works specifically with digital camera systems. Also available in a 92" Non-Flame Retardant spandex in both colours.

Muslin
A light to medium weight cotton, muslin is 6-8 ounce in weight, available in FR, NFR, and bleached white. Stocked widths are 9', 10'6" 14', 16' and 20'. Black is also available in 10'6" wide. Trevira muslin, a polyester, inherently flame retardant fabric and other widths and colours are available on special order.

Netting
Flame retardant netting materials include cinenet, (single net) 24' wide, used for cutting light intensity, and scenery (opera) netting, 30' wide, which can be sewn into other drops to support cut out sections, yet still appear invisible.

Polysilk
Economical silk substitute. Available in a variety of colours, NFR and FR. Colours are 45" wide, black or white is 60" wide.

Polystretch
Similar to Spandex, Polystretch is 10' wide, white FR.

Scrim
Sharkstooth or bobbinette, both available in black and white, are made into seamless drops for various lighting effects. Sharkstooth is 35" wide, bobbinette slightly smaller at 29" wide. Leno (a filled scrim) at 29" wide is used for cycloramas. All scrim materials are flame retardant.

Velour
Available in standard cotton and polyester, velour is available in weights ranging from 15 oz - 32 oz. Typically used for Main Drapes in most theatres, velours are also recommended for their acoustic properties in concert halls and recording studios. The weave of this fabric produces a plush nap, giving it the grand appeal for theatrical applications.

Vinyl
Used mainly for sandbags or protective bags/barriers, 16 oz, 62" wide vinyl is stocked in a variety of colours and is also flame retardant.

Voile
Sheer fabric is 9" wide and available in a variety of colours for speciality drapes.

Wool Serge
Wool Serge has been used as a masking fabric in the UK for many years. At 26-30 oz weight it's heavier than velour and therefore also works well where acoustic properties are required in a drape, such as concert halls.
Drape Finishes

Stage drapery is constantly viewed by your audience. Drapes should hang even and level, and open and close smoothly. Below are standard finishes for the top and bottom of any custom drape. The option you choose depends on how the drape will hang in your space.

1. **Jute/Grommets/S-Hooks**
   This is the most common drape finish used for hanging from heavy duty drape track. 3” jute or polypropylene webbing is sewn on the top edge to reinforce #4 grommets, every 12” from the centre. The grommets are doubled on each corner of the drape to allow for a master carrier or for extra support when hanging. Standard S-hooks are used to hang to the track carrier.

2. **Jute/Grommets/Ties**
   Same finishing as above but rope ties are used instead of S-hooks to tie the drape off to a hanging pipe. This is the standard top finish for border & leg drapes.

3. **Hidden Ties**
   Cotton twill ties are sewn onto webbing for extra reinforcement. This method also masks the pipe when a border is not an option.

4. **Pipe Pocket**
   Typical finish for trade show drapes or rental drapes, a 4” pipe pocket is sewn at the top with an angle back to allow for easy installation, yet still mask the pipe from the front view.

5. **Separate Pipe Pocket**
   A separate 4” pocket is sewn onto the bottom hem of a drape with a 2” skirt, masking the pocket from front view. This is a popular finish for scrim or muslin backdrops, as it provides a light lock on uneven floors and the weight of the pipe allows the drape to hang as flat as possible.

6. **Open Bottom Hem**
   Similar to a pipe pocket on top, this finish leaves the standard bottom hem open on each side to allow for a bottom pipe. For most drapes, this bottom hem has a chain, sewn in a separate pocket (not shown), and the sides are sewn shut. The chain adds weight to the drape, which helps it hang evenly.

**Fullness:** Fullness represents the depth of the pleats in relation to the original width of the fabric; standard box pleats create more fullness and also create a bulkier seam, thus enhancing the drape to appear “full.”

1. **Flat** ➔ no pleats, fabric is sewn flat
2. **25% Fullness** ➔ 2” pleats, sewn 12” apart (centre pleat to centre pleat)
3. **50% Fullness** ➔ 3” pleats, sewn 12” apart (centre pleat to centre pleat)
4. **75% Fullness** ➔ 5” pleats, sewn 12” apart (centre pleat to centre pleat)
5. **100% Fullness** ➔ 6” pleats, sewn 12” apart (centre pleat to centre pleat), can also be sewn as 3” pleats - 6” apart
Theatrical Stage Styles

The following are common theatrical drape styles, as they pertain to the theatre:

**Main Draw**  
Situated at the proscenium opening, it separates in the centre and parts to either side. Fullness usually varies between 50%-100%. Fabric is opaque and appealing, as it is used in a decorative, as well as a productive manner.

**Valance**  
Installed behind the proscenium opening to provide top masking and reduce height. Fabric and fullness match the main draw.

**Borders**  
Provide overhead masking of lights, ceiling, or grid.

**Legs**  
As they mask the side stage area, legs also provide an opening for the actors to enter from the wings. These sets of vertical panels are hung on opposite sides of the main draw. Legs can be dead hung, track operated, or installed on pivot devices.

**Mid/Rear Draw**  
Similar to the main draw, it is used to divide the depth of the stage in half, in order to reveal another scene behind it. When used as a rear draw, the stage back, or rear wall is covered.

**Cyclorama**  
A seamless drop, either flat, or curved, is located at the rear of the stage. Common fabrics used are muslin, filled cloth, or PVC vinyl. Cycloramas are usually lit to produce various effects.

**Scrim**  
Sharkstooth and bobbinette are usually made into a seamless drop, which is used to create various effects, with lighting from the front or the back.

**Backdrop**  
Commonly used for painting scenery, backdrops are most often made with canvas or cotton muslin.

**Floor Cloth**  
Used to cover stage floors, this heavy canvas drop is sometimes painted to match set scenery.