

All Dressed Up

Directors have long collaborated with designers to transport actors into the past in glorious costume dramas. Beneath the wardrobe, there is always a story to tell.



LET THEM EAT CAKE: (above) Sofia Coppola makes sure her masquerading background actors are ready for the grand ball in *Marie Antoinette* (2006). Coppola was granted special permission to shoot at the Palace of Versailles, as well as inside the Palais Garnier in Paris, where this scene takes place. (opposite) Martin Scorsese in character for his cameo, with Daniel Day-Lewis, in *The Age of Innocence* (1993). Because of the emotional intensity of the story, Scorsese jokingly called the movie “the most violent” film he’d ever made.



WALKING AND TALKING: Victor Fleming (center) sets up a tracking shot to follow Scarlett (Vivien Leigh) and Rhett (Clark Gable) on their first evening stroll after the birth of their child in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). As F. Scott Fitzgerald said of Fleming, “in the morning [he] could direct the action of two thousand extras, and in the afternoon [decide] on the colors of the buttons of Clark Gable’s coat.”



THE SPARTANS: Zack Snyder (left) sizing up against King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) on the blue-screen soundstage of *300* (2007). With the majority of the male cast bare-chested much of the time, Snyder said he was more concerned with creating an exciting and visually stunning action movie that would appeal to a wide audience than a typical historical epic.



PRESIDENTIAL-LOOKING: Tom Hooper (left) counsels the second president (Paul Giamatti) and his first lady, Abigail (Laura Linney), on the set of the HBO miniseries *John Adams* (2008). Hooper made sure costumes, wigs, and props were precisely of the time and not a decade off. “People wore wigs like hats.”



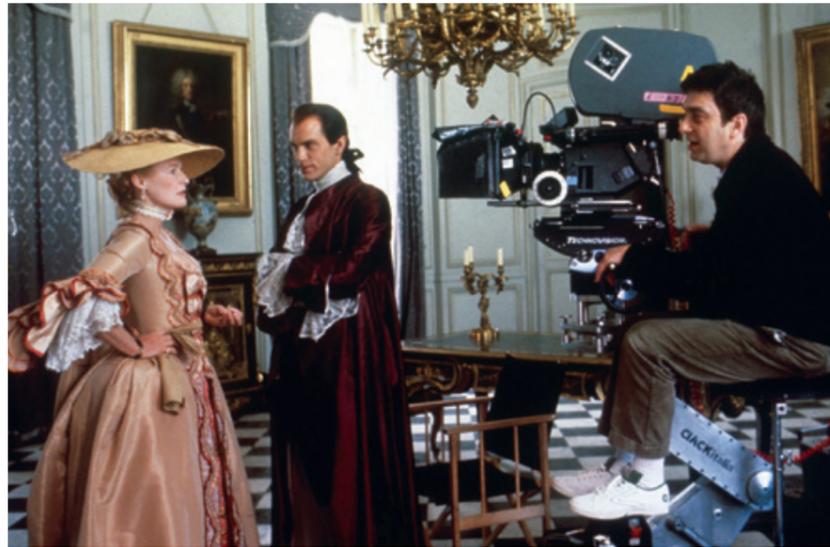
MUSIC MAN: Miloš Forman (center) prepares Tom Hulce (right), as Mozart, for his grand entrance in *Amadeus* (1984). “You have to do more in preproduction [for period pieces], and it’s very important you have an understanding with your set and costume designer—so you don’t have to worry about every little detail.”



NO MANN’S LAND: Michael Mann (left), with Daniel Day-Lewis (right), studied 18th-century landscape and portrait paintings to evoke colonial America at that time for *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992). “We were trying to re-create the conditions, the tones, the value systems of 1757,” he said.



ITALIAN HOLIDAY: James Ivory (right) guides Helena Bonham Carter and Judi Dench through a picturesque Tuscan countryside in *A Room with a View* (1985). This was the first of three E.M. Forster adaptations from Merchant Ivory Productions, a team that would become synonymous with costume dramas.



DRESSED TO KILL: Stephen Frears, with Glenn Close and John Malkovich, was adamant that costumes not eclipse the actors' performances in *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988). One hundred costumes were produced in six and a half weeks. Due to the number of close-ups, silk, cotton, and other natural fabrics had to be used.



CHURCH AND STATE: Kari Skogland preps the Sacred College of Cardinals in their Vatican chamber for a season three episode of Showtime's *The Borgias* (2011-13). Despite extensive research, it was difficult to get the fabrics and the colors of that period because they are no longer made the same way.



LAST DANCE: James Cameron, with Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio, wanted the costumes for *Titanic* (1997) to be as accurate as possible and allowed 50 designers a full year to create the clothes for the film. A core group of 150 extras were hired so that new extras wouldn't have to be refitted for wardrobe.



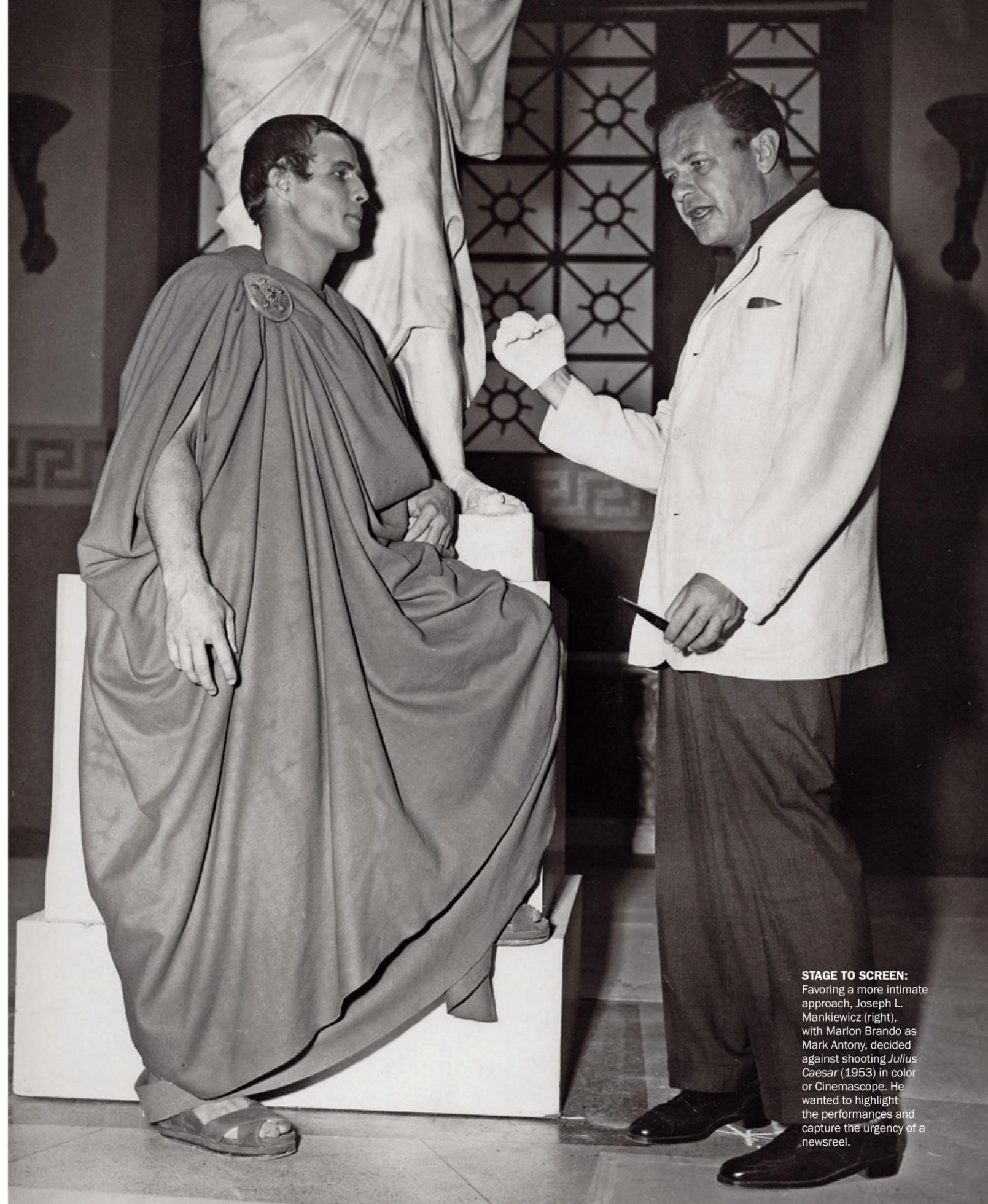
QUEEN OF THE NILE: Cecil B. DeMille's *Cleopatra* (1934) had one of the most extravagant wardrobes in the history of movies, but star Claudette Colbert rejected her gowns on the first day of shooting and a new wardrobe had to be hastily designed. DeMille's mandate from Paramount was to make a historical epic with lots of sex.



HEARTFELT: When Ang Lee was asked to direct *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), with Kate Winslet, Emma Thompson, and Harriet Walter, he had never done anything remotely like Jane Austen. But “I felt I knew it by heart, that by its nature it was very close to what I do. So I took the challenge, and I went to England.”



WAR OF THE WORLDS: Michelle MacLaren (center, standing) directs a gruesome scene from the HBO series *Game of Thrones* (2011-present). “What was mind-blowing to me ... was the size of the sets. They’re absolutely ginormous. Instead of having 20 extras, you have 200 extras. It’s just a bigger animal—which is really exciting.”



STAGE TO SCREEN: Favoring a more intimate approach, Joseph L. Mankiewicz (right), with Marlon Brando as Mark Antony, decided against shooting *Julius Caesar* (1953) in color or Cinemascope. He wanted to highlight the performances and capture the urgency of a newsreel.