

LIGHTING EFFECTS: Through a Window, at night

Scenario:

The goal here is to create the appearance of light through a window on the floor (the window itself is not visible and is to look as if it's in the "fourth wall"). It's night time and there are three main relevant components to the effect: a constant bright light clearly outlining the panes, as if from a street lamp; leaves breaking up that light moving in the breeze, and the occasional passing car's headlights which pan across stage and are affected both by the shape of the window and dancing leaves. (This one was inspired by the conditions in my room the last time I wrote a tech note).

Approach:

This lighting effect screams "gobos!"

The easiest part is the stationary windowpanes from the streetlight. A simple gobo such as Rosco 77138 (DHA No. 138), which is a double-hung, six-pane window cutout would be good. The light coming through it should be aimed on the floor of the stage.

Between the window gobo and the stage there should be something to represent the leaves. Some possibilities are actual leaf-shaped things (such as flame-retardant foliage from Rosebrand!) connected to some sort of irregularly shaped gear to move it around a bit. This might be difficult to mount. Another possibility is an appropriate combination of a stationary leaf gobo with a rotating gobo which gives some sort of flickering effect. Of course the easiest version is if there is no wind so that the leaves can simply be stationary. This look might be less visually distracting for the stage.

The other component is when the cars go by and the headlights cause window-shaped lights to pan across the stage. This light should be less strong than the main streetlamp light. This part would not require leaves because the car headlights shine from street level up through the window whereas the street lamp shines down through the leaves and through the window. The tricky part is not only the moving but that the angle of the shadow needs to change as the

light pans across the stage. If done with a gobo, the gobo should be stationary and the light source move behind it in an arc.

References:

Backstage Handbook

Rosco Gobos online at www.rosco.com/gobocatalog