USEFUL BUILDING TIPS

A fixing point in the middle of the ceiling is very useful – can be a simple 'eye' or pulley mechanism, or simply a strong hook.

Lengths of thick bamboo make a useful resource for building a variety of structures. It is advisable to have a variety of thickness and lengths, but you will build up these resources as you go along

With carpet tiles you can make simple fixing points on the floor by making a cardboard square with a string loop attached, that slips under corners of four tiles. Failing this, sandbags are useful for stabilising structures or securing things to the floor. They can be bought from theatre suppliers, or home-made by simply filling small plastic or cloth bags with sand.

As you get accustomed to building in your chosen space you will discover useful places for cup hooks (and stronger) to which you can attach strings, cloths, accessories. Tying knots in the corners of cloths enables easy fixing over hooks and allows the cloth to hang in curves rather than straight flat edges.

Hanging hoops allow attractive attachment of several pieces of cloth from one point.

Cheap white plumbers tubing, cut into different lengths and bent in hot water, can have a variety of uses;
- As building materials i.e. boat, pyramid, other structures
- As vocal tubes, to encourage calling, sound-making, chanting etc.
- As 'boomwhackers' – different lengths, when dropped on floor, play different notes. Good for exploring rhythms.

Can be simply secured by drilling holes in ends and tying together.

A cheap paddling pool, if dressed with cloths and other natural materials, can be used to create a variety of features
- Water – to make magical pool. A small pump is a useful acquisition as it adds other qualities to a water feature – splashing, dripping sounds etc. Garden centres will often lend ponds and water features
- Earth/sand/compost/other materials that need containing.

Fire – constructed with coloured lighting gels over sparkling fairy lights, then surrounded by sticks and twigs.

Clouds – collect old quilts and pillows. Always useful for creating a soft area.

Parachutes are great for creating environments quickly, particularly white ones as they can be lit different colours.

For filling corner spaces, attach middle of parachute to corner/ceiling and then drape sides out and above as required, either to make 'cave' or cover walls.

12'x12' clear polythene dust sheets, from local DIY stores, can create enclosed but translucent spaces i.e. spaceships/submarines. They can also be stripped to make 'rainfall', waterfalls, shimmering icicles, showers.

Camouflage nets are really useful for creating environments and can sometimes be acquired second-hand from army sources

A variety of netting, which can often be found in local scrap stores, is also useful for completely changing a space and creating a surface to which other items can be attached.

Long white cloths (1.5 m. x 8m) can be used to quickly transform a space in many ways: above to make sky/roof, on floor to denote a certain area, create a particular surface, or around room as tent, sails, screens etc. They can be lit with different colours and take projections beautifully.

A simple rectangular screen made with ply and white cloth can be used in a variety of ways – dividing space, shadow work, projections, as part of another structure.
Withy screens can be used as a base for weaving ivy, ribbons or other materials to create separate areas

Stretch wrap can have a number of uses – smaller props, screens, light catching source or can be layered on top of itself to make large areas of sparkly translucent flooring, wall coverings i.e. watery effect.

Large amounts of sand (contained on a cloth/tarp) can create a beach, a desert, a riverbed. Recommend storing in a wheelie bin as this makes clearing up, moving and storage easier.

Long carpet tubes, cut to different lengths make excellent instruments (when end 'batted' with flip flops), are visually stunning when used to create structures and can be used to create giant puppets too.

Large branches which simulate trees can be used to create a forest or woodland glade in your space. Long pieces of curvy laurel can be used to create a variety of environments. Suggest, once collected, keeping and re-using again and again.

Space blankets can be used to dress a space, as well as making excellent props with good visual, sound and textural qualities.

Large safety mirror – good for focusing participants on selves. Can also be cut into smaller mobile mirrors with 'snips'.

A cheap mosquito net makes an instant, easily mobile 'dwelling' and can also be used to contain specific props.