



Turn Winter Into Summer Overnight With Rosco SoftDrop®

Little Women was a three-part BBC drama based on May Alcott's classic novel. Set in 19th century Concord, Massachusetts across four seasons, this latest adaptation was filmed entirely in Ireland during summer 2017. "It was a big challenge but I would like to think nobody would watch it and say 'You shot it in County Wicklow in August,'" said producer Susie Liggat in a press release. The *Little Women* Production Design team utilized Rosco SoftDrops to establish the seasonal changes on set as the storyline progressed – and they did it with extreme efficiency to meet the production's incredibly tight shooting schedule.



Production Designer, Susie Cullen, explained that the benefits of using Rosco SoftDrops in *Little Women* were twofold: 1.) the backdrops ensured consistency between the exterior footage captured on location and the Computer-Generated Imagery created by the Visual Effects department; 2.) Rosco SoftDrops enabled the crew to quickly shoot both summer and winter scenes on stage.

Establishing Time & Place



Original composited image



Final summer SoftDrop image

The Little Women production team supplied several photographs that our Rosco Digital Imaging team used to assemble the establishing image for the single-sided, daytime SoftDrop. Because the physical set pieces weren't built in time for the location photo shoot, the VFX team provided RDI with digital elements, such as fences, a bridge, a stone gateway and patches of grass to digitally layer into the original image. Once work on the summer drop was completed, the Rosco Digital Imaging team removed leaves from the trees and added snow to transform the summertime image into the production's winter SoftDrop image.



Final winter SoftDrop image

After both summer and winter SoftDrops were printed, additional scenic elements began turning up – either as C.G.I. or as built elements on-location. These elements, which included a small henhouse, a rope swing and some additional trees along the fenceline, were painted directly onto the fabric SoftDrop – a feat not easily achieved with traditional vinyl drops.



Additional scenic elements were painted onto the SoftDrops once they arrived on set

According to Cullen, applying paint to the printed SoftDrops did not present any major difficulty once they ensured that the quality of the printed and painted whites of the snow matched. It was also important not to apply too much paint; A.) so they didn't blot out the printed elements, and B.) to avoid activating the flame retardants in the SoftDrop. They achieved the desired effect by using Spray N Go rather than relying on too much brush work – but testing is always recommended before painting too much scenery onto a SoftDrop.

Seasonal Quick Change



Once they moved into the Sound Stages at Ardmore Studios in Ireland, the production team needed to figure out how to switch between shooting summer scenes one day, winter scenes the next – and then back again to summer scenes a few days later. To facilitate the many seasonal scene changes happening on set, the winter SoftDrop was hung in front of the summer SoftDrop. The winter drop would be rolled up during the spring/summer scenes and then hung to straighten overnight for the snowy scenes scheduled to shoot the next day. Susie Cullen and the production team loved the flexibility of the SoftDrops and were amazed at how wrinkle-free they remained, even on the painted areas.



Cullen said: “Rosco SoftDrops enabled us to have the changing of the seasons within a very tight shooting schedule. It meant no problems, no big load of equipment or scheduling around, we could wrap one SoftDrop in the evening and then come back next morning to the next season. That was the big one for us.”

ROSCO
SoftDrop®

Whether your next scene is set in 19th Century Massachusetts, New York City in the 1960’s or present-day Southern California – Rosco Digital Imaging can provide the background imagery you need on your next production. For more information about all of our background solutions for filmmakers, visit the Rosco Backdrops & Digital Library page on our website www.rosco.com