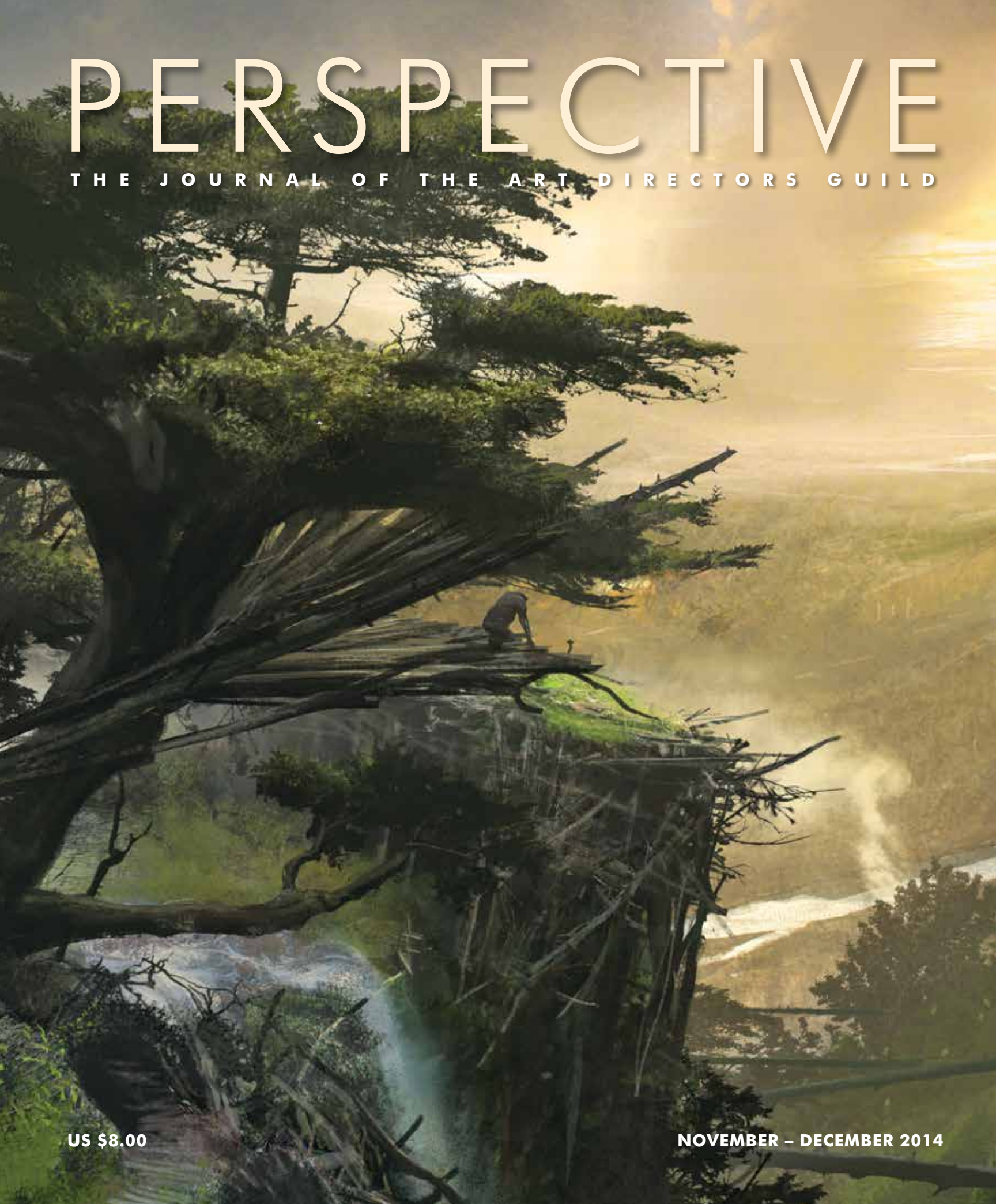


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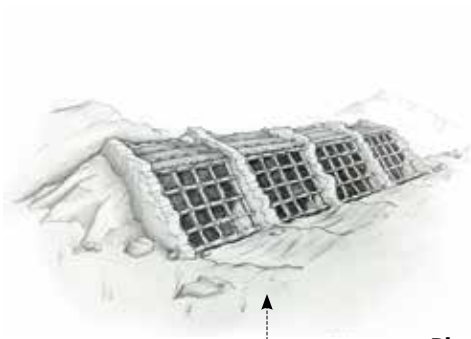
– MARK HUGHES, **Forbes**

DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

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ON THE COVER:

A digital presentation sketch of Ape Mountain courtyard, drawn by Illustrator Jaime Jones for *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* (James Chinlund, Production Designer). The set, supposedly in the Mount Tamalpais/Muir Woods area of California's Marin County, was actually shot in Vancouver, B.C.

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**THE ART DIRECTORS GUILD MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES
PRODUCTION DESIGNERS, ART DIRECTORS,
SCENIC ARTISTS, GRAPHIC ARTISTS, TITLE ARTISTS,
ILLUSTRATORS, MATTE ARTISTS, SET DESIGNERS,
MODEL MAKERS, AND DIGITAL ARTISTS**



THE PROBLEM-SOLVER-IN-CHIEF

by Michael Baugh, Editor

The feature articles in this issue nearly all have a theme in common: Production Designers, and Art Departments as a whole, are regularly called upon by many other departments—production, lighting and camera, even screenwriting—to solve their problems. We art folk joined this end of movie-making because we wanted to create extraordinary visual images; we wanted to tell stories with the pictures a camera sees, rather than the words a character speaks. But when all is said and done, we spend an awfully large portion of our time, not on art, but on nuts and bolts—and on pulling cookies out of fires.

James Chinlund tells us (on page 12) how he solved a problem that we are all facing much more frequently: a story that is written for a specific and well-known place (San Francisco) must *not* be shot there, must be done somewhere else with more robust financial incentives and rebates, no matter whether it looks correct or not. The studio had a problem—they needed an inexpensive place to shoot *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*—so they called in Mr. Chinlund and his team, talented and creative problem-solvers, to get the studio out of its bind. Only then could everyone begin their artistic work, creating the unique look of a nonhuman civilization.

The script that Marc Fisichella read for *The Maze Runner* (page 24), just like books by James Dashner on which it was based, describe paper maps, lots of maps, a new one created almost daily, as the young captives try to decipher the immense maze that entraps them. What sounded good on the page, was actually pretty confusing to look at and nearly impossible for an audience to understand. The Art Department solved that dilemma, too, with a new set, new props and a whole new approach to recording the evolving understanding of the maze—the Art Department as dramaturg.

Utopia (page 38) shoots twenty-four hours a day with 132 robotic cameras on a five-acre set in a Santa Clarita canyon. No one had any idea how to light it at night in a way that would satisfy the building and fire departments there; that is, no one until Production Designer John Janavs put on his engineer's hat and drew an articulating light tower hidden by day within a wooden water tank. It is design, of course, but it is problem-solving even more, and the lighting director is the direct beneficiary.

Andrew Menzies called on the collective talents of his British Art Department (page 48), using a technique they call “making a squeeze,” to duplicate the last remaining WWII German Tiger tank so *Fury* could shoot multiple units. When the American Sherman tanks, which are actually the lead actors in the film, were too pristine and restored for the story (and traditional aging techniques on the valuable historic vehicles were out of the question), a mud car wash was devised by—you guessed it—the problem-solving department.

Birdman director Alejandro Iñárritu wanted the project to be a peculiar laboratory experiment (page 66), an entire film shot (or seeming to be shot) in a single continuous take. This required sets that could become larger or smaller, or have additional entrances or exits, all configured before the camera on the day of shooting. Production Designer Kevin Thompson solved the problem with a rabbit warren of character-filled spaces in a two-story set at Kaufman-Astoria Studios. Like the other designers above, he combined his traditional role as a visual artist with the position that the Art Department has to fill on nearly every project: the film's official problem-solver-in-chief.

contributors



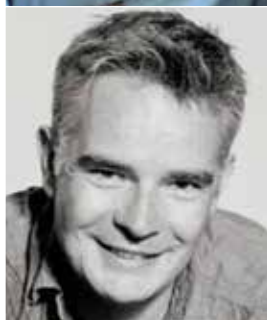
Born and raised in New York City, **JAMES CHINLUND** studied fine art at CalArts in Los Angeles, experimenting in light sculpture and large-scale installation work. After graduating, he returned to New York and started his film career as a carpenter before finding his first opportunities as a designer on independent films and music videos. During this period, he worked with frequent collaborator/director Darren Aronofsky, in addition to other directors in the New York independent film world including Todd Solondz, Paul Schrader and Spike Lee. Mr. Chinlund has been active in commercials and fashion as well, collaborating with Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, Spike Jonze, Fredrik Bond, Lance Acord, Gus Van Sant and Harmony Korine. In 2010, he won both the Art Directors Guild and the AICP awards for *Absolut World*, a commercial with director Rupert Sanders. In 2012, he completed work on *The Avengers* for Marvel. Mr. Chinlund lives in Los Angeles with his wife Clare and daughter Ruby.



MARC FISICHELLA, a Boston native, received a degree in film from Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts with a minor in architecture and design. Upon graduation, he designed commercials for a Boston-based production company in the 1980s. Eager to break into feature films, he moved to Los Angeles in 1987. One of his early jobs was drafting for Richard Hoover on the television series *Twin Peaks*. From there Marc was thrilled to land a job as the Art Director for twenty-four episodes of *Tales From the Crypt*. Working with so many high-profile directors proved to be an exceptional learning experience. Work has since taken Mr. Fisichella around the world to England, New Zealand and Malaysia, where he was the Supervising Art Director on the Oscar-nominated *Anna and the King* with Production Designer Luciana Arrighi re-creating the 19th century Grand Palace of Siam. He lives with his wife Robin and sons Alec and Aidan on Mount Desert Island, in Downeast Maine.



JOHN JANAVS grew up in Studio City surrounded by the entertainment industry. With degrees in architecture from both UC Berkeley and UCLA and a license to practice, he was ready to create buildings, but not long after graduation he got a call asking if he had a couple of days to work on a television show. Twenty-two years later, he's still in the middle of a broad and varied career. Starting out, he worked for other Production Designers on *The Primetime Emmys*, *The Billboard Music Awards*, *The Soul Train Music Awards*, *Jeopardy!* and countless others. Since 1999, he's worked as Production Designer on over a hundred television shows with thousands of sets: *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, *The GQ Awards*, *Real TV*, *America's Most Talented Kids* and a vast array of surprisingly challenging reality shows including *The Biggest Loser*, *The Complex*, *For Love or Money*, *Hell's Kitchen* and *MasterChef*. He helps his wife Jin, also an Art Director, herd their three children on their way to responsible adulthood.



Born in Galway in the Republic of Ireland, **RAF LYDON** first worked as a commercial Graphic Designer in print media before entering the Irish film industry in 1994. He began in Graphics and then became a prop master. When he moved to Los Angeles in 1997, he continued to work for a time as a prop master before joining the Art Department full time as an Art Director. Over the past sixteen years, Mr. Lydon has served as an Art Director in many different areas of the entertainment industry: film, reality, multi-camera and single-camera television. As a Production Designer, he has been responsible for the look of *The Biggest Loser* on NBC and *Full Metal Jousting* on the History Channel. He recently produced The 18th Annual Art Directors Guild Awards Show.



Lecturer **KAREN L. MANESS** is the principal instructor of Scenic Art and Painting for the University of Texas at Austin, and Charge Scenic Artist at Texas Performing Arts. After studying studio art and set design at Whittier College in Los Angeles, she continued her studies at Cobalt Studios in New York, and The Florence Academy of Art. She is active in the leadership of the United States Institute of Theatre Technology. **RICHARD M. ISACKES** is a stage designer in regional theater, opera and television. He grew up in Oberlin, Ohio, attended Oberlin College and holds an MFA degree from Carnegie Mellon University. He currently holds the Joanne Sharp Crosby Chair in design and technology at the University of Texas.





Born in Cricklewood in northwest London, **PETER RUSSELL** was the son of set decorator Peter Anthony Russell, who gave him his first exposure to the workings of an Art Department. Graduation from school coincided with one of those industry lulls, when no films were being made in the UK, so he went to teacher training college instead. After qualifying, he got a teaching post in Hemel Hempstead, but continued to pursue film work in his off time. In 1978, he got his first film job with Production Designer Stuart Craig on *Saturn 3*, and under Art Director Norman Dome he started to learn the fundamentals of the craft...and tea-making. His first big Art Direction job was working with the model unit of *Aliens*, and he went on to work under great designers such as Anton Furst, John Box and Elliot Scott. Now just about to finish his fifty-third project, he has been nominated three times for an ADG Award: *Gladiator* (1998), *Finding Neverland* (2002) and *Captain Phillips* (2011).



KEVIN THOMPSON was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota; received a BA in architecture and art history from the University of Minnesota; and worked as an architect in Minneapolis and then New York for more than a decade. His longtime interest in film led him to become a New York City-based Production Designer in the 1990s. His early projects included Larry Clark's *Kids*, James Gray's *Little Odessa* and David O. Russell's *Flirting With Disaster*, Jonathan Glazer's *Birth*, Michael Haneke's *Funny Games*, Marc Forster's *Stranger Than Fiction* and Michael Clayton, directed by Tony Gilroy. Mr. Thompson designs both big-budget studio movies and smaller independent films, choosing projects based partially on the script but more so on his desire to work with specific directors. In addition to the recently released *Birdman*, he designed *The Bourne Legacy*, also directed by Gilroy, Jason Reitman's *Young Adult*, and Judd Apatow's *Trainwreck*. He still resides in New York City.

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Kathrine Gordon
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-Ann Hornaday, THE WASHINGTON POST

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Suzie Davies

BEST FILM EDITING
Jon Gregory, ACE

BEST COSTUME DESIGN
Jacqueline Durran

BEST MAKEUP
Christine Blundell

Mr. TURNER

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news



Above: Actor and comedian Owen Benjamin will once again host the Guild's Awards Banquet.

AWARDS VOTING TIMETABLE

For the 19th Annual Art Directors Guild Excellence in Production Design Awards

by Debbie Patton and Wendi Fletcher, ADG Awards & Events Department

Tuesday, October 7, 2014 – Television submissions BEGIN

Thursday, November 6, 2014 – Television submissions END

Saturday, November 8, 2014 – The Awards Committee reviews the television submissions

No later than **Wednesday, November 12, 2014** – Members will be notified if their television submission was accepted. At this time, they may upload promotional content for television and feature films to the ADG website

Wednesday, December 10, 2014 – Feature film list delivered from AMPAS®

Tuesday, December 16, 2014 – Online voting BEGINS for nominations for feature films and television

Sunday, January 4, 2015, 5 PM – Online voting ENDS for all nominations

Monday, January 5, 2015 – Nominations ANNOUNCED

Tuesday, January 6, 2015 – Online voting BEGINS for final ballots

Thursday, January 29, 2015, 5 PM – Online final voting ENDS

Saturday, January 31, 2015 – Winners announced at 19th Annual Awards Banquet at the Beverly Hilton Hotel



For any questions, please contact:

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HISTORIC SOUNDSTAGE LOST TO THE WRECKING BALL

by Hub Braden, Production Designer

Until September 20 when it was razed, Stage 28 at Universal Studios was the longest-standing historical film set in Hollywood. Built in 1924 for Universal's Lon Chaney feature film *Phantom of the Opera*, the stage itself was the film's primary set. It had a 36' turntable built into the stage area, behind an ornate plaster proscenium portal, with opera boxes lining the stage walls. The turntable mechanics—still the original spindle gear mechanism—just needed some oil and a mechanic to turn the motors, and they would perform again.

After explaining that the stage had to be torn down to allow expansion of the studio tours, Universal said that it was in the midst of a multimillion-dollar preservation effort to save the set and move it to another location. The studio is in discussions with museums and institutions, hoping that it will be accessible for public view wherever it ends up. "Initially, we were unsure if the set, with portions that are nearly ninety years old, could be removed and reassembled in a new home," the studio said in its newsletter. "Now, with the help of a team of expert preservationists, our own archivists, forensics and some amazing 21st century tools like three-dimensional imaging, we have begun the delicate and precise work of ensuring that much of this set becomes accessible and a lasting part of film history."

What will actually happen to the wood and plaster set pieces remains to be decided. The stage itself is gone forever.

Clockwise from top left: Stage 28 as a pile of rubble; ornate plaster work copied from the Paris Opera; hosting studio tours; and the 1925 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA.



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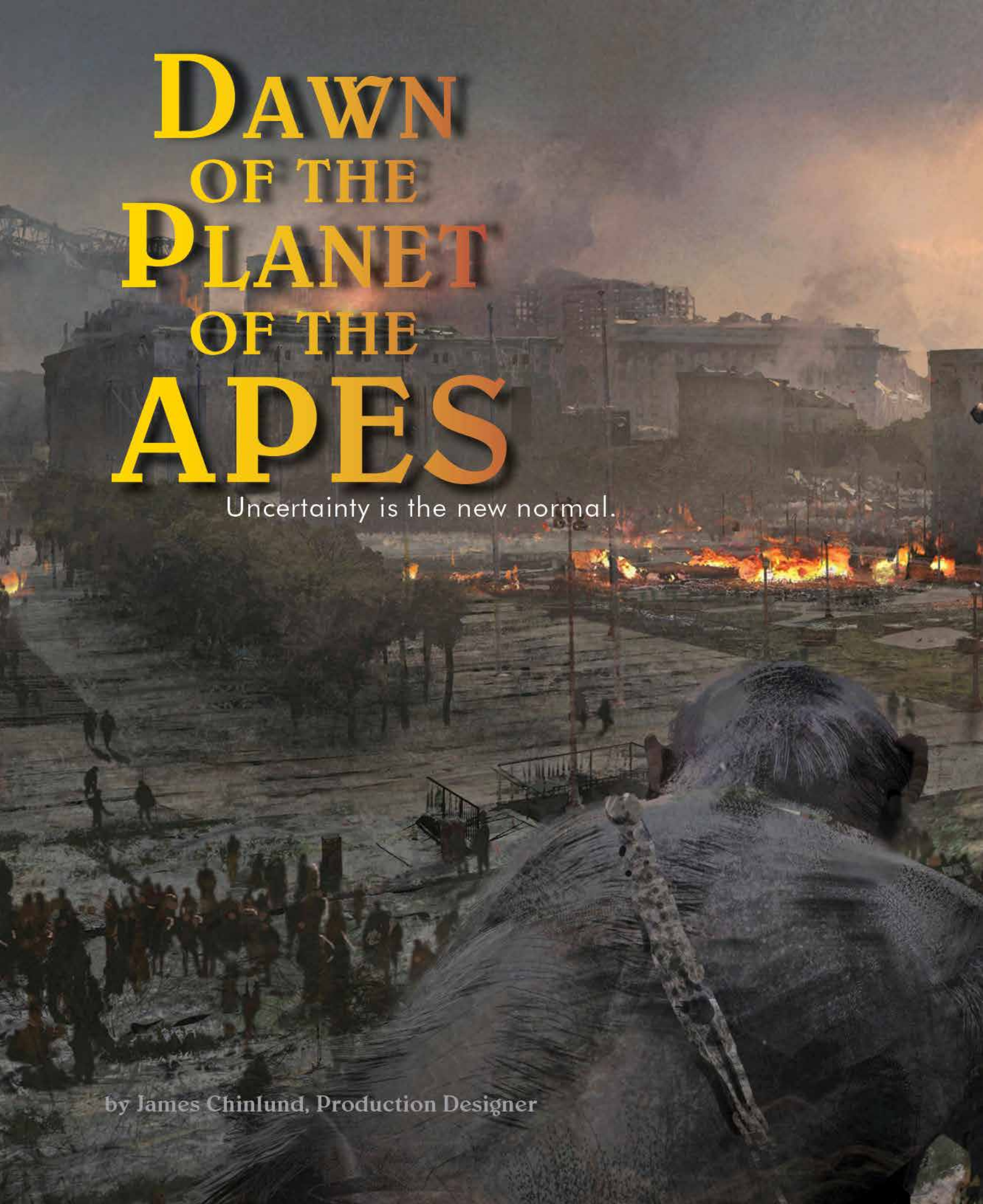
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The background image is a dramatic, dark, and desaturated scene of a city in ruins. In the foreground, the back of a large, dark-furred ape's head and shoulders are visible, looking out over a devastated urban landscape. The middle ground shows a wide, dusty street with several small figures of people walking. In the background, city buildings are visible, some of which are on fire, with bright orange flames and thick black smoke rising into a hazy, orange-tinted sky. The overall mood is one of despair and the aftermath of a catastrophic event.

DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

Uncertainty is the new normal.

by James Chinlund, Production Designer







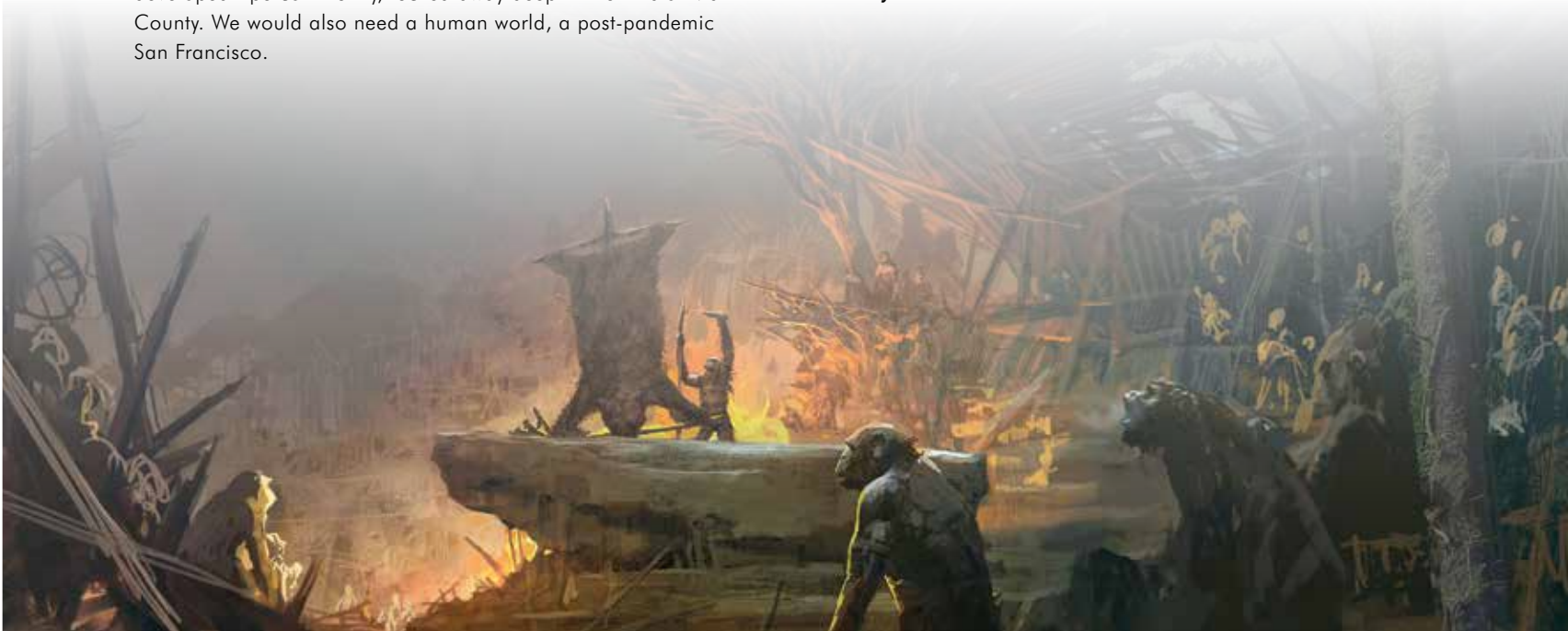
Days after I had been hired to design *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, I found myself in the uncertain position of being on a show with no director and no script. I have had experience working without a script, but no director, and not even a story treatment, was new for me, even in these strange days we are living in.

The one thing I did know, and that carried me through, was that I had assembled the beginnings of a wildly talented Art Department team and that the potential for this project was through the roof. My greatest pleasure as a Production Designer is exploring worlds that I have never even been tempted to investigate. When I first received the call for this film, I realized that such an exploration was opening up before me.

As a kid, I had always been fascinated (and often terrified) by the world of *Planet of the Apes*. Now I was being given an opportunity to create a visual bridge between the lives of today's primates and those of the advanced simian civilization that we all learned about from the 1970s films and television series. So the first task for this talented team was to learn as much as we all could about the lives of primates. This story, when we would finally be able to read it, would take place somewhere between the last time we saw the Apes (2011, in *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*) and their mature world we saw so many years ago. It would be a fully developed Ape community, tucked away deep in the hills of Marin County. We would also need a human world, a post-pandemic San Francisco.



Above, clockwise from top left: A physical model of the Ape courtyard and Caesar's tree, built by Brett Phillips under the supervision of Art Director Billy Hunter, was an invaluable tool for construction as the team tried to crack the code of how to build this wild organic structure. A rehearsal day in the Ape courtyard finds James Chinlund discussing a possible route of access with director Matt Reeves and lead actor Andy Serkis (Caesar). A view of the back of the Ape courtyard set at night, occupying 24,000 square feet and standing 45' tall. Below: Vance Kovacs' Photoshop illustration shows a view of the Ape courtyard during a ceremony after the hunt.





Above: An early Photoshop illustration of the Ape mountain by Jaime Jones shows several orangutan nests in the foreground. Imagining the world of the Apes as they hid themselves away deep in the woods of Mount Tamalpais was a thrilling endeavor for the entire Art Department. Right: Another Photoshop illustration by Jaime Jones shows the entire world of the film. A high angle over Caesar's tree and courtyard reveals San Francisco in the distance. Opposite page, clockwise from left center: A capture from the film showing the palpable sense of foreboding as Malcolm (played by Jason Clarke) arrives at the Ape gate, an entirely practical set, without any extensions, on location in a clear-cut in British Columbia. A Photoshop paint-over by Jaime Jones of a location photo shows an early conception of the Ape gate. A set photo of the approach to the gate shows the detail brought to the Ape world by set decorator Amanda Serino and her team. This sketch by Set Designer Martha Johnston shows an orangutan nest. Mr. Chinlund writes, "As we developed the look of the Ape world, we analyzed the ways different primates lived in nature. Orangs live largely solitary lives and we represented that idea in their architecture."



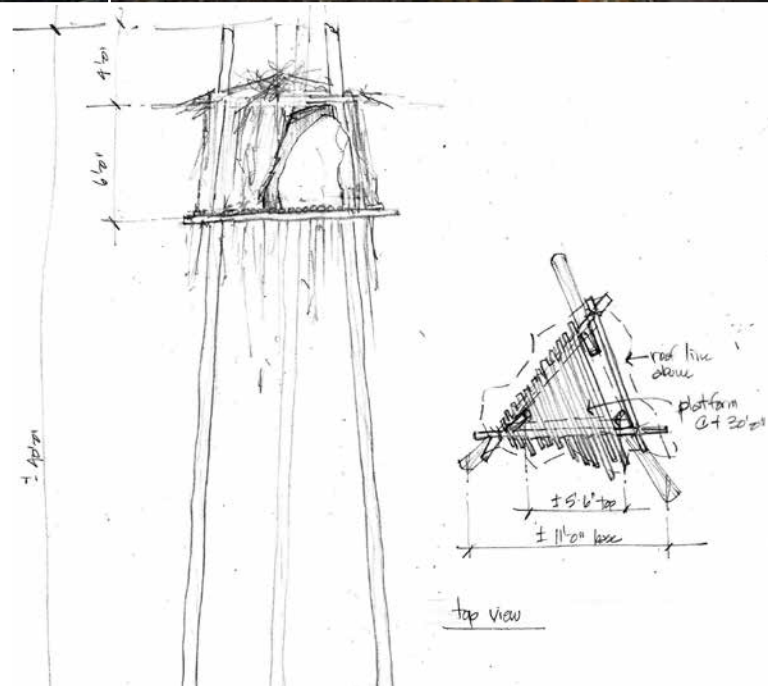
A few weeks later, director Matt Reeves walked in. From my initial meeting with him, we were lockstep in our desires to create an entirely grounded portrait of this evolving new culture. I was thrilled to learn that he wanted to push it even deeper, focusing the film on the inner workings of the Ape community and seeing this new world through their eyes. Matt was an inspiring leader and collaborator; it was a tremendous pleasure to be there every step of the way with him as he evolved the story. For a designer, the opportunity to be in the room during the birth of the narrative, to be able to feed the process with locations and concepts, is really the pinnacle. This was such an exciting time, a daily process of back and forth, bringing to Matt the work the Art Department had been doing and receiving his notes on background and story arc. We quickly landed on the overall shape of the film.

The work that the visual effects artists at WETA had done on the previous film, and the advances in the technology in the interim, put a tremendous amount of pressure on my team to match the high level of realism and craft that visual effects would bring to the picture. I was powerfully impressed by the work they did; it really pushed us all to up our game and try to bring as much detail and depth as we could to the project. Playing with the terrain of



San Francisco and Marin County—a known quantity—allowed us to portray the changes in this new world in ways that an audience would immediately recognize. This wasn't a disembodied, post-apocalyptic world; this was a place most people knew. By doing our best to hold on to an accurate representation of the city, the changes that fifteen years without humans had brought would resonate that much more expressively.

The difficulty was: the production had no plans to shoot in San Francisco. As is typical nowadays, one of my first tasks was to comb the usual-suspect rebate states for a likely substitute. I stumbled upon an intersection in New Orleans that lined up well with the intersection of San Francisco's California and Market streets, which I have always loved for its wonderful perspectives and architectural complexity. The decision was quickly made to shoot New Orleans for the urban work, and Vancouver for the forest and Marin exteriors.

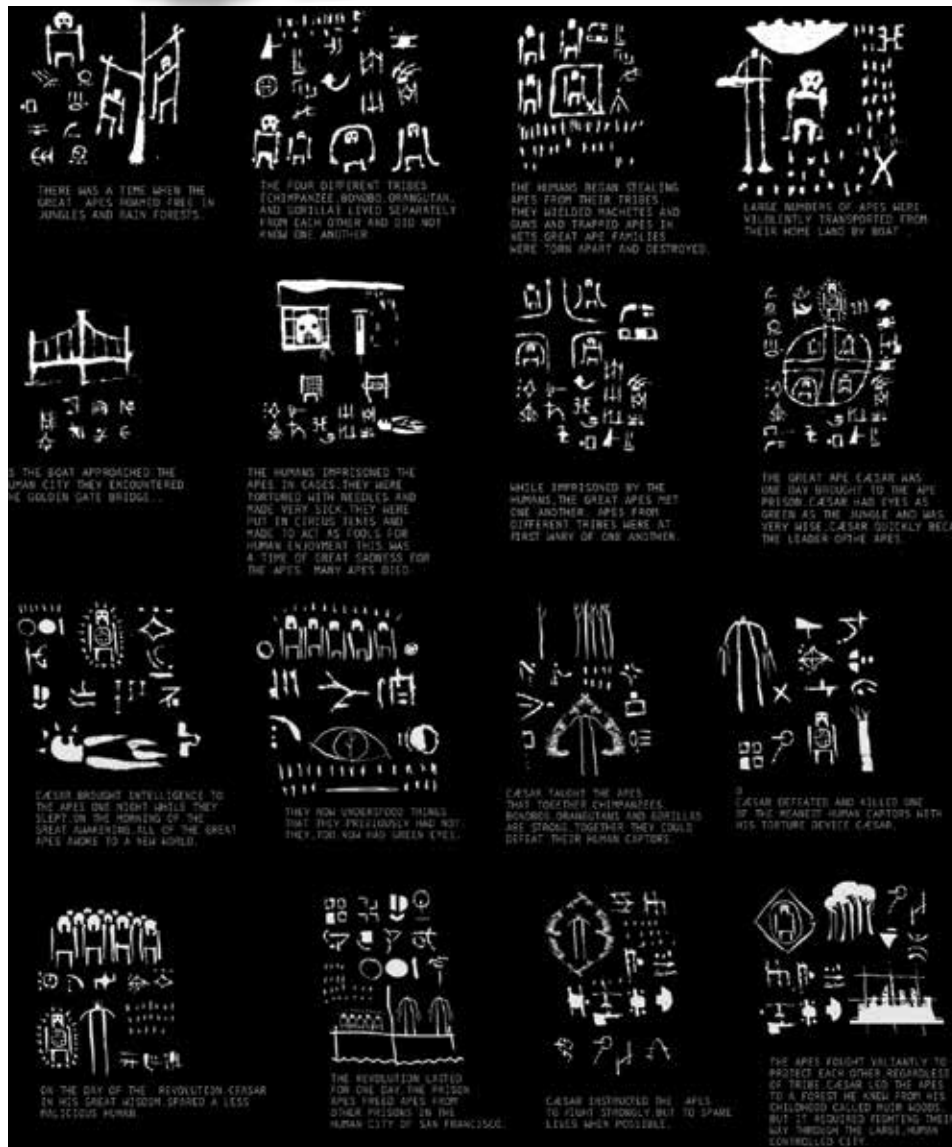




APE MOUNTAIN

Understanding the evolution of the Apes was a deep and wide-ranging challenge. With the help of researcher Lizzy Klein, we looked at all sorts of primitive cultures along with exploring the lives of primates themselves, as we tried to construct the intermediate evolutionary step. For example, chimpanzees live in large clans—as many as one hundred live together in a group. Orangutans are largely solitary. Gorillas live in pods of one male and up to ten females. This information was used to imagine what their next steps would be architecturally and to design structures that would follow this logic. The main courtyard was designed as a chimpanzee habitat, imagining that this would be the seat of the ruling clan and its immediate family, as well as a communal gathering place. Some tall nest-like structures were conceived as orangutan nests. In other areas, large messy pile-like structures are meant to represent gorilla pods. Developing that early form language fell to the talents of Illustrators Jaime Jones and Vance Kovacs, Art Director Billy Hunter and Set Designer Luis Hoyos; they were all instrumental in bringing the Ape world to life in those early days.

Evolving the form language for the Ape architecture required walking a line, showing their intelligence but not pushing them so far ahead that it felt implausible. We played with the idea that, as the Apes moved higher into the mountains, their building techniques evolved as well, starting at the bottom with cruder forms and finishing in the courtyard with a more sophisticated nautilus form. The nautilus layout shows thought, a plan, pattern, and felt like a gentle way to show that Caesar and the other Apes were thinking in an evolved manner. His home reflected the most advanced form of Ape architecture, a launch point for future evolutionary development. We went to great pains to think through all aspects of their daily lives, going as far as organizing the community around a central water source. We pushed this idea, developing a practical aqueduct system that ran through the mountain development. Every step of the way we questioned ourselves and made sure that, while the forms we were generating felt dynamic and new, we were working within the realm of the possible, that the audience could believe the Apes had actually built



Top: This sample of Ape writing is the Rosetta Stone of sorts, a wall used by Maurice the Orangutan to teach young Apes to write. It is an example of the great work done by Graphic Designer Andrew Campbell, ultimately sculpted into the rock wall by head sculptor Jaime Miller and his team. Above: On the walls of the Ape courtyard, the entire history of the Apes' journey from their ancestral home to the labs of San Francisco was represented in a pictographic language developed by Mr. Campbell. This section describes the enlightenment of the Apes and their escape from the labs.



I was very fortunate to have John Hoskins as construction coordinator. I could easily imagine a more rigid mind snapping when presented with some of the early models of the courtyard, but he was a wonderfully patient partner, helping us break it down and make a plan.





180' wide, a complete world. Set Decorator Amanda Serino and her team brought so much carefully measured thought to the courtyard, evolving the systems of daily life for the Apes, bringing the space to life.

The courtyard was the center of the Ape civilization and within it was a Rosetta Stone of sorts, a wall that told the story of the Apes and the journey from their homeland through the trials of captivity, to this mountain kingdom where we find them today. The story was told with a collection of glyphs and pictograms drawn from a rudimentary language beautifully created by Graphic Designer Andrew Campbell. Once again, looking at the visual language from the early Apes films, we tried to find intermediate forms to bridge from our time to the future, and satisfy the fans that would be paying close attention. This wall stood at the base of Caesar's tree, the true seat of the king and the most advanced architectural form. This set was built onstage and contained the one opportunity to go inside the Apes' homes and experience their daily lives. Once again, Amanda's team illuminated the world with fire systems, water containment systems, food storage. It was such a fun process for all of us, fleshing out the rules of daily life.

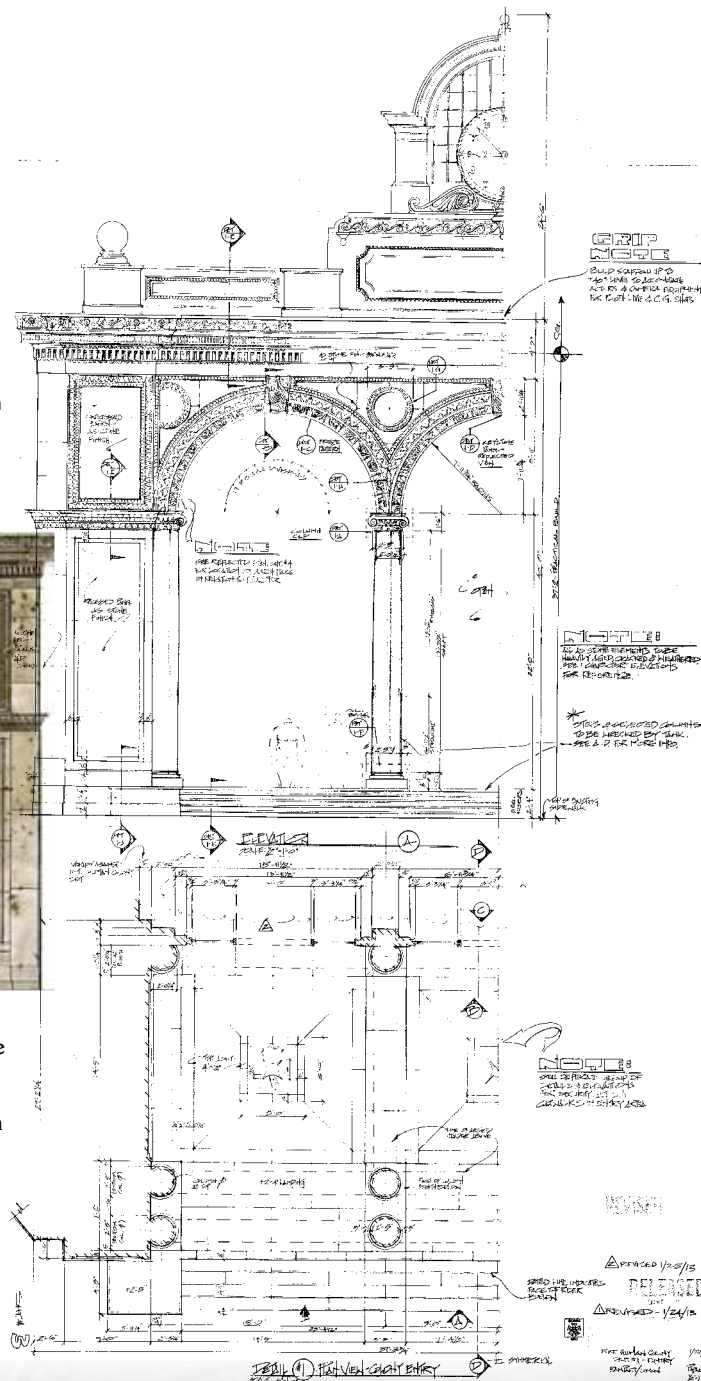
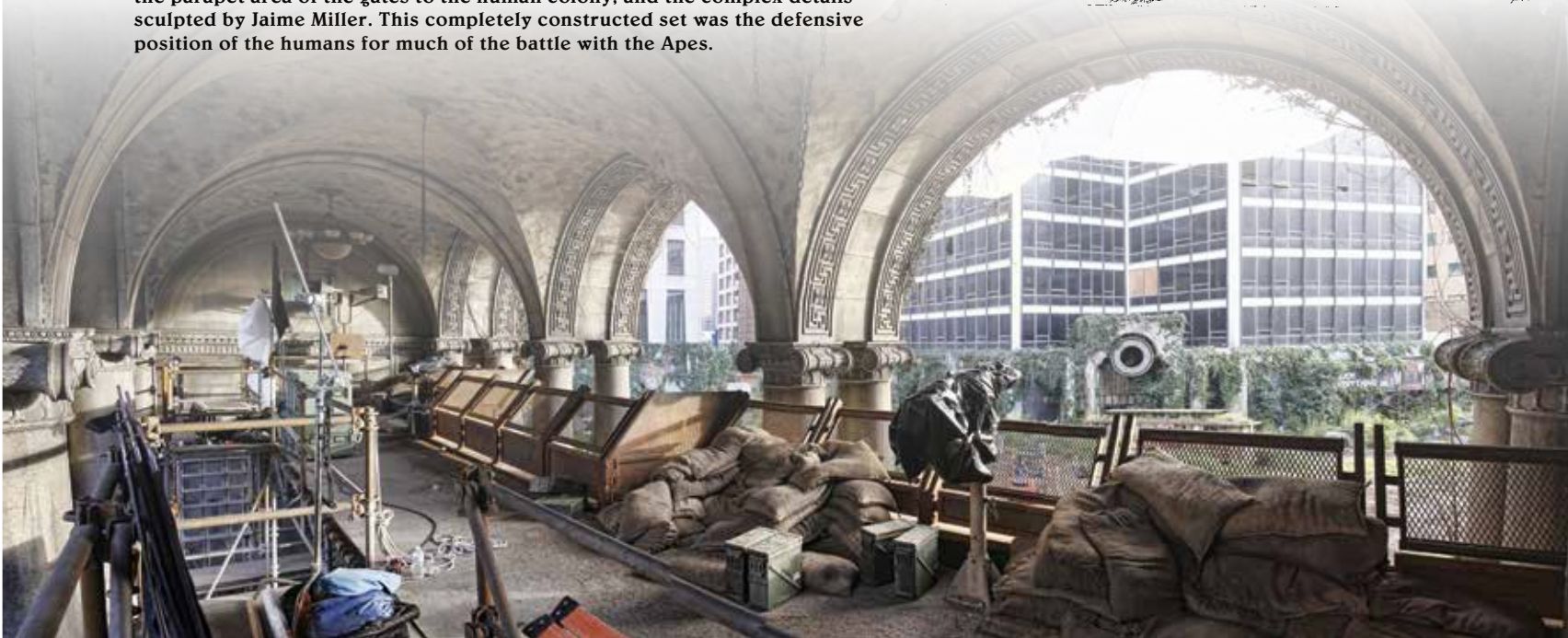
While all of this was going on in New Orleans, another team was getting rolling in Vancouver under the supervision of Art Director Kelvin Humenny. The most critical set to me was the gate at the entrance to the Ape mountain. I wanted to create a moment of shock that reflected how powerful the Apes were and reinforced the feeling of intimidation that the humans would feel as they began to enter the Ape world. I am very proud that most of what you see in that sequence was built physically, with very little in the way of visual effects extension. The team

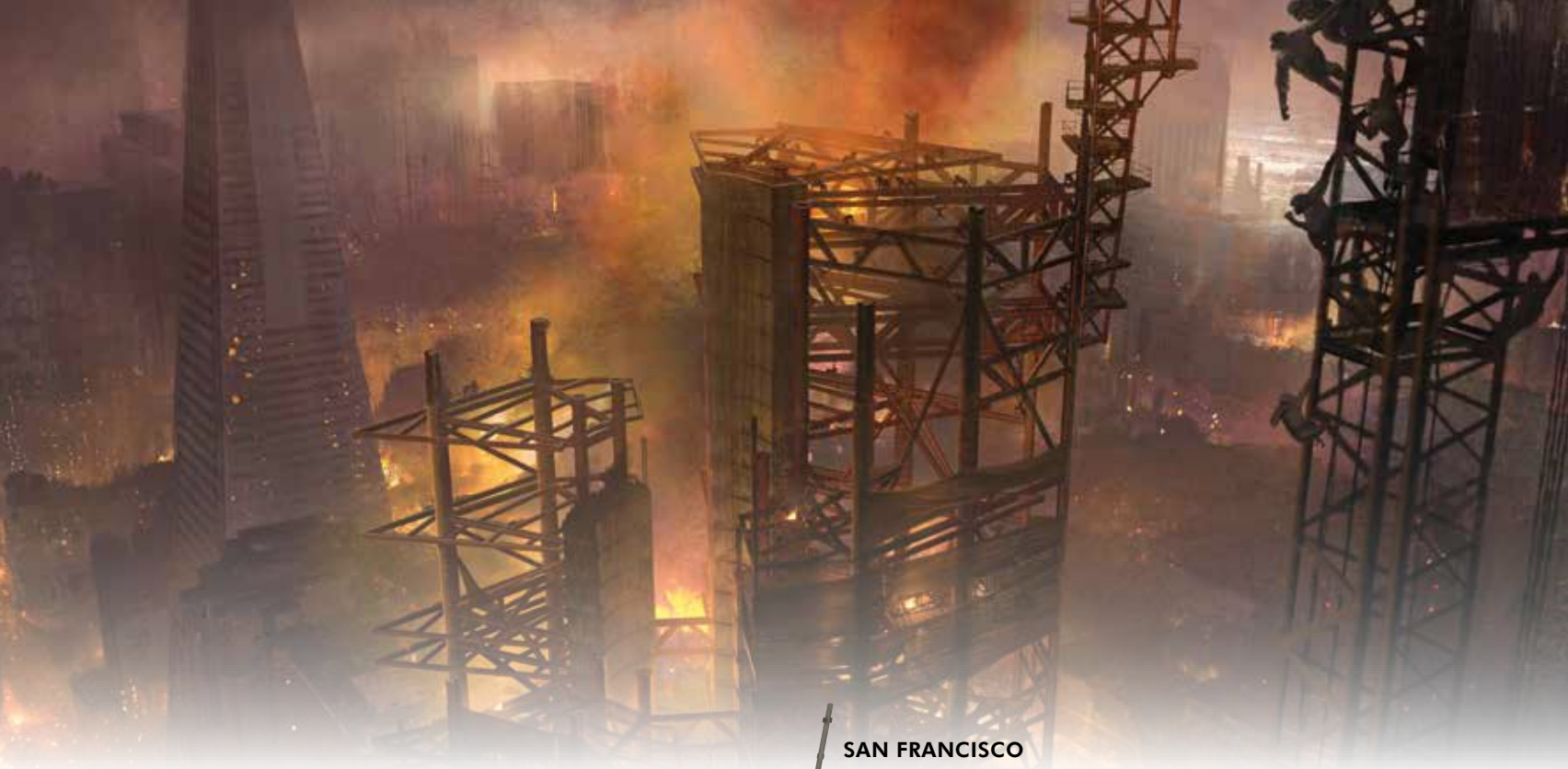
in Vancouver did a spectacular job assembling that gate and the surrounding environment. Standing there in person, watching the craftsmen move the giant timbers into place, you got an immediate sense of power and scale. The set was quite efficient as we shot in a clear-cut logging area. Most of the timber was scraped off the ground and collected from the surrounding hillsides. In the end, it became a visual statement of power, and reflected the idea of the various tribes of Apes as a community, a civilization.

The split between the two locations was a tough commute, more than two thousand miles. I was often stuck in one place or the other for weeks at a time and was so grateful to have a strong partner in Supervising Art Director Naaman Marshall. He held things together in New Orleans as my time was splintered between the distant sets. There is no way things would have stayed on track without him.

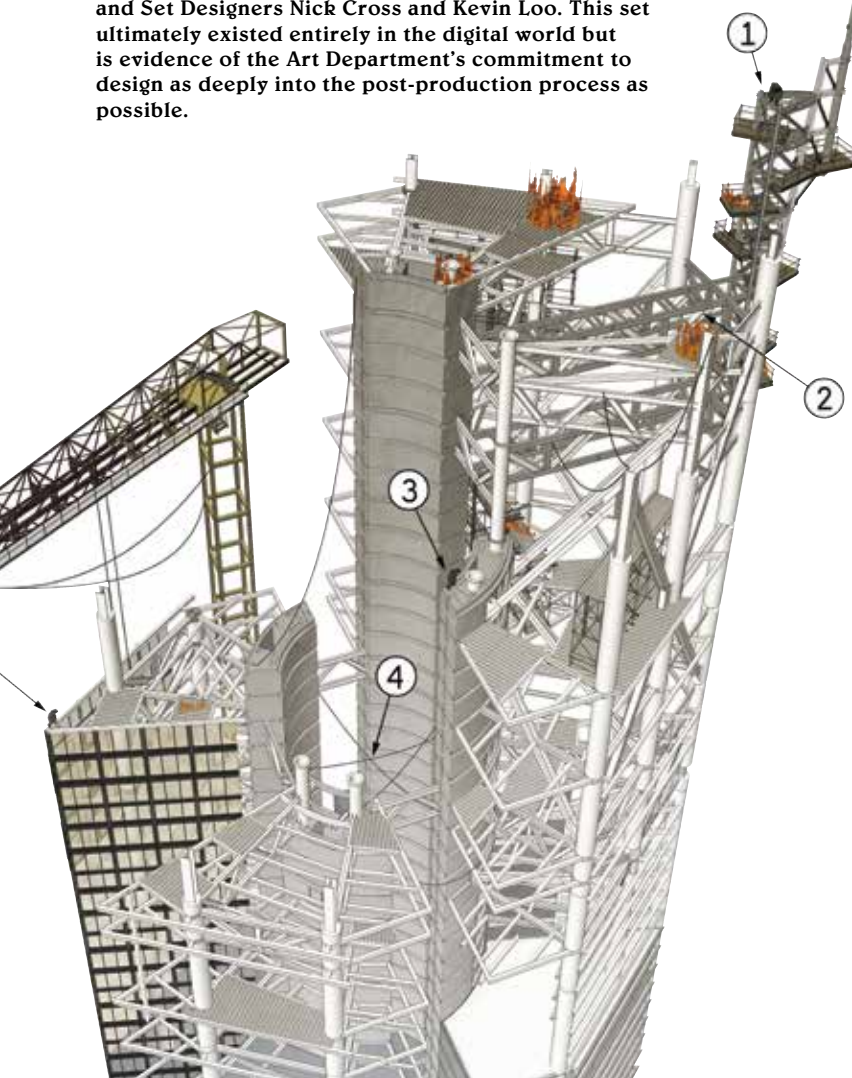


Opposite page, top to bottom: A beautiful Photoshop illustration by Nathan Schroeder that was used to form the plan of attack for the greens work on the human colony street. The intersection of Rampart and Common streets, seen as the installation of the human colony gets underway. Dan Gillooly and his greens team installed an immense volume of greens in a tight time window—a true 360-degree set. A frame capture from the film shows the Apes' arrival at the human colony. The enormous set was installed and shot for three months on the street in New Orleans. This page, above: A rendering of the entrance to the human colony. This paint-over was done in Photoshop by Art Director Aaron Haye over Set Designer Greg Papalia's pencil drawing. It was used to show the post-destruction look of the face of the colony after the battle with the Apes. Background: An elevation by Mr. Papalia showing the entrance to the human colony. This was based on an existing building at the corner of Market and California streets in San Francisco. Below: A set still showing the parapet area of the gates to the human colony, and the complex details sculpted by Jaime Miller. This completely constructed set was the defensive position of the humans for much of the battle with the Apes.





Above: This Photoshop illustration of Koba's Tower by Jaime Jones captures the epic scale of the final battle. Below: Koba's Tower, the scene of the final battle, modeled in Rhino by Art Director Aaron Haye and Set Designers Nick Cross and Kevin Loo. This set ultimately existed entirely in the digital world but is evidence of the Art Department's commitment to design as deeply into the post-production process as possible.



SAN FRANCISCO

Early on, I was interested in showing the human world's progress frozen as the pandemic hit, man's evolutionary path stopped as the Apes' was starting. The human colony encapsulated this idea, a hypothetical structure at Market and California streets in San Francisco, which played with the idea that developers had taken the shell of an older building and redeveloped it, installing a massive tower into its base. I liked the contrast between this cutting-edge architectural form and the classical architecture of old San Francisco. I felt like it wrapped up the conflicted history of the humans in one form and also created a great battleground for the final conflict.

The intersection of Rampart and Common in New Orleans was ideal for the colony. I knew there would be a lot of scenes based around the site, and a fair bit of action, and this intersection was ideal: vacant buildings on three sides in a lonely area of the city. One corner was a parking lot, perfectly situated to hold the exterior of the colony building. It was a dream location, and the city's generous cooperation gave the production an unprecedented amount of control. Even with that control, though, it took a highly coordinated effort between construction, greens and set decoration to install the set in the short time allowed there. Art Directors Aaron Haye and Scott Plauche guided the set to its completion and greensman Dan Gillooly and his team installed greens on a scale I have not encountered. John Hoskins and his crew were efficient and precise. I am so proud of all their work.

As I was poking around the Web during my initial research I stumbled upon the image of a skyscraper fire in Russia. It appeared like a giant torch standing tall over the city. It was a powerful image and satisfied several challenges I had: How could I show that we were really in San Francisco, when so much of our work was actually in New Orleans? Also, how could I showcase the Apes in an urban environment, really

accentuating the best of their action. A tower under construction created an ideal piece of architecture to solve both issues. I presented the idea of the tower to Matt and to writer Mark Bombback and they grabbed it firmly with both hands. In the end, it became the site for the final climactic fight.

The design of the tower and the human colony are an ideal illustration how critical the marriage between WETA and the Art Department was. It was important to me that things be designed as completely as possible, even if they were going to exist exclusively in the digital universe. The scope of the environments we designed was such that, no matter how much was built physically, extensions would be needed in almost every set. With the help of the Illustrators and Set Designers, the design was pushed deep into the virtual. Art Director Aaron Haye was essential to the evolution of the tower design and really drove it home. He wound up in a very close relationship with the visual effects team, from Previs to completion, and it shows in how seamlessly all of the disparate components work in unison.

Dawn of the Planet of the Apes was an epic journey from its uncertain beginnings to a film that is now one of my proudest moments. I was surrounded by an amazing group of talented people, from top to bottom, a truly stellar team. Sometimes things really do work out. **ADG**

Right, top to bottom: Mr. Chinlund writes, "This Photoshop illustration by Nathan Schroeder shows the power coming back on in the human colony as we look down California Street in San Francisco. I love the lonely feeling of the light at the end of the canyon, such a haunting place." A typical street by Nathan Schroeder shows a quarantine checkpoint. This was used as a piece of visual evidence to help explain what has happened in the world since we last saw it in *RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES*. Nathaniel West's Photoshop illustration of the Stockton Street Tunnel. This was the area the Apes used as a prison to round up the humans after the initial battle. Mr. Chinlund loved this location for its iconic San Francisco identity. A set still of the Stockton Street set in New Orleans shows some of Andrew Campbell's graphics that depict the strife of the last days of human civilization.

James Chinlund, Production Designer
Naaman Marshall, Supervising Art Director
Marisa Frantz, Aaron Haye, Kelvin Humenny,
William O. Hunter, Scott Plauche, Art Directors
Nick S. Cross, Javiera Varas, Assistant Art Directors
Kim Sinclair, Visual Effects Art Director
Jaime Jones, Vance Kovacs, Nathan Schroeder,
Nathaniel West, Illustrators
Landon Lott, Prop Illustrator
Andrew Campbell, Lead Graphic Designer
Sally Hudson, Amanda Hunter, Roger Johnson,
Graphic Designers
John Berger, Sarah Forrest, Luis Hoyos, Martha Johnston,
Greg Papalia, Mike Stassi, Peter Stratford, Set Designers
Kevin Loo, Digital Set Designer
Brett Phillips, Lead Model Maker
Adam Mull, Model Maker
Marc Baird, Trevor Goring, Benton Jew,
Jim Magdaleno, Jim Mitchell, Mark Moretti,
Jesse Michael Owen, Josh Sheppard,
Adrien Van Viersen, Storyboard Artists
Michael Cawood, Previs Artist
Charles Bodenheimer, Billy 'Jilly Bones' Jones,
John B. Keys, Scenic Artists
Amanda Moss Serino, Set Decorator





Breaking Through the Walls of Logic

by Marc Fisichella, Production Designer

On paper, a maze is a pretty simple concept to grasp. But give the maze one-hundred-foot-tall walls of stone, set a mere twelve feet apart, while keeping it cinematically coherent and powerful. *The Maze Runner* posed a truly confounding challenge.

Visual effects would play a key roll but budget limitations meant that the majority of the interaction within the maze needed to be practical. The design needed to create a sense of massive scale within what was essentially a very confined space, where little sunlight could penetrate. This sense of scale had to be present both in the practical sequences and the larger effects shots as well. Just as important, the maze had to pass the scrutiny of even the most die-hard fans of James Dashner's bestselling young adult novels.



The problem with shooting within the walls of a maze is that it only looks like a maze from a bird's-eye point of view. When you are actually in it, the maze becomes a tomb of walls where you can see only one, maybe two, corridors in one shot. What

is frightening about a maze is the confusion it creates because everything looks the same and there is no ability to see an overview. I wanted to give the audience a sense of the scale and scope of the overall maze to allow them to visually grasp the magnitude of its seemingly impossible challenge. To do this, a map of the maze in its entirety was necessary. Director Wes Ball had a vision of a dark and claustrophobic maze just beyond the gates and, as it progressed, the spaces became larger and brighter forming a ring of eight sectors. Wes mapped out the journey that the young boys, called Gladers, would take in the story starting at their home encampment, the Glade, a large meadow completely surrounded by the maze. He and I used this map to extract points where different scenes would take place.

The Map Room

The best place to accomplish this was in the map room. In the original script, Thomas and Minho study maps drawn by the Runners whose task it is to run the maze each day mapping their route to try to find a way through. The hand-drawn maps were then pieced together to reveal a solution of sorts. Wes was having a hard time with the awkwardness of overlapping paper maps that somehow would fit together to form a bigger picture. I suggested a model in place of the maps. Crudely fashioned but strikingly visual, a 3D scale model constructed of tiny sticks and organic materials by Gladers transcribing the Runners maps, the dimensional creation enables the audience to see the expanse of the maze without having to leave the confinement of the Glade. The complex model became a striking centerpiece of the map room set. To accomplish it, I had the mold makers build runs of stick walls in different thicknesses. Casts were made of the walls and painted to match the actual sample sticks, and the pieces were flexible and easy to cut and apply to the table top. Wes' original map was enlarged to the eight-foot diameter of the table and used as a pattern for the model.

Opposite page: Minho (played by Ki Hong Lee) and Thomas (Dylan O'Brien) plan their next move in the map room, constructed on location to allow the action to be fluid and to tie in the exterior of the Glade. Above: Model Maker Miranda Sink applies cast latex stick walls to the map room tabletop using the enlarged maze map pattern.



The Maze

We discussed many concepts of how the maze would have been constructed by the Creators—smooth, formed concrete walls, crudely stacked stone, one continuous surface area or many components put together were all options that we considered. Ultimately the basic design, of the inner walls of the maze was quite accidental. I started by working with small foam blocks I had made to half-inch scale in eight-foot increments. I used them to configure different ideas and layouts for the maze sets. This allowed me to quickly adjust wall heights and passageway widths as Wes and I would talk through and block the different sequences. I would start with a layout and Wes would ask, “Can we open this wall and add a short corridor here?” “Sure,” I replied, “its just a model. You can do anything you want.” We rearranged and stacked the blocks as we talked, not giving much care to stack them neatly, I began to really like the idea and look of these stacked concrete blocks that were misaligned and slightly askew to each other. Long runs of wall soon became riddled with shadows and overhangs, ledges and distressed gaps and seams. It made perfect sense on many levels. It allowed us to construct a very modular set that could be manipulated and morphed into different layouts just as we did with the model. During shooting, sections of wall could be rolled out for lighting or access and rolled back into place without concerns about hiding seams and break points. This modular approach was also instrumental in determining set wall heights. Working in eight-foot increments, walls could be changed from 16 feet to 24 feet or 32 feet where necessary, to allow wide shots looking deep into the corridors without the need for set extensions. In the end, we settled on about five different configurations that worked for all the sequences.

I always felt that smooth surfaces would not work well photographically and heavy textures were needed to create shadows and accentuate the jagged edges of the maze. Stacking eight-foot cubes of stone gave detail that was small enough to see in intimate shots but large enough to give a sense of the grand scale of the maze compared with the actors. Adding cracks, splits and distressed edges into the massive stone blocks, presumably because they had been crushed over time by the extreme weight of the 100-plus feet of concrete above them, added nice unique features to the walls. This also provided motivation for the tangled root systems and vines climbing and reaching for the tops of the walls.

Art Director Doug Cumming used all of the model layouts to determine the type and number of set piece components needed to build any of these five layouts, with variations, easily and quickly. Limited stage space (an empty warehouse) prevented us from building all five layouts simultaneously. A menu of single-sided wall sections were all built with a variety of thicknesses,

Above: A rendering of the main gates to the maze, which close at night, drawn by Illustrator Landon Lott. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Foam blocks were used to design the multiple layouts of the maze set. A subfloor for the maze complex was laid first, shown here on stage at an empty Sam's Club store, large enough at almost 100,000 square feet to do the job, but the 27' ceilings were quite a challenge. The greens crew applied multiple layers of vines and vegetation to the maze walls. One of the typical sections of maze wall, detailed with cracks and crumbling stone, vines and debris. Minho in a section of the maze showing oversized gear strips where walls raise and lower to change the puzzle's labyrinthian dynamic. The foam-block maze walls were finished with plaster and gravel to simulate concrete.



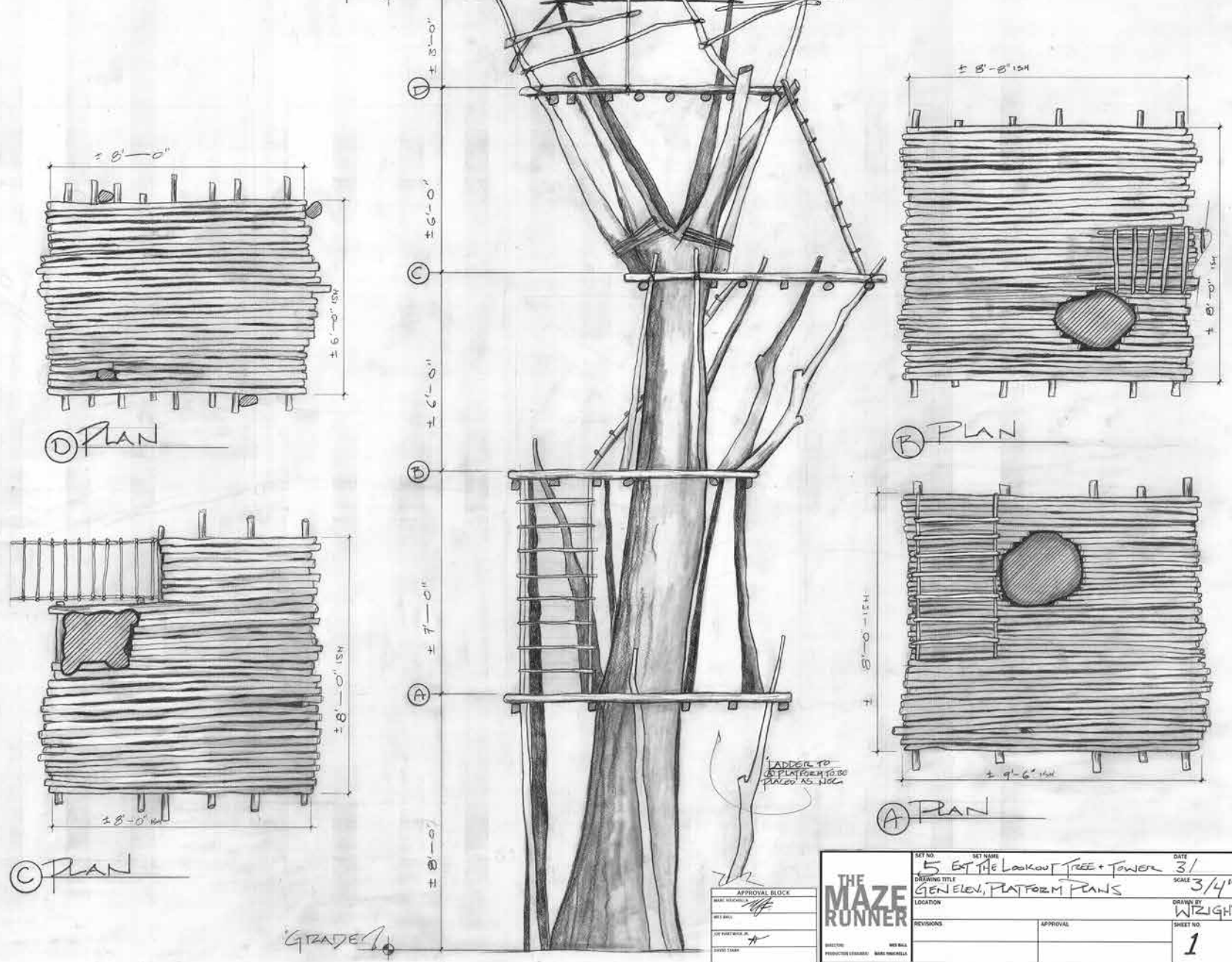
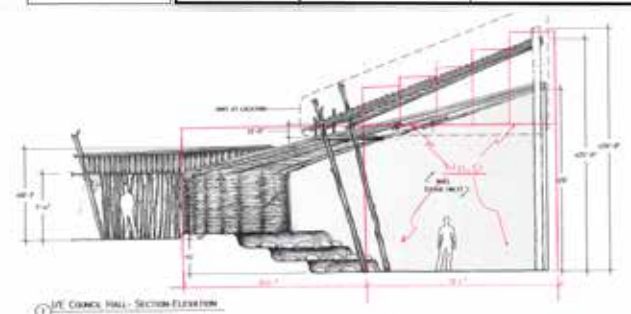
Right: A presentation sketch of the lookout tree by Landon Lott. Below: The tree, built on location in a secluded field in Jackson, Louisiana. Opposite page, clockwise from top: A hand-drawn construction drawing of the lookout tree by Set Designer Wright MacFarland. Another hand-drawn construction drawing, this time for the council hall in the Glade, drawn by Set Designer Michelle Harmon. Production Designer Marc Fisichella's sketch of the pits, where greenies or new arrivals, spend their first night. They are also a secure location to hold a Glader who might be dangerous or in need of punishment.



corner sections and three-sided units for moving camera shots. The floor was constructed as a 140-foot by 100-foot area; any configuration would fit on this pad. The floor itself needed to be smooth enough to run an electric camera cart swiftly through the maze to capture the Runners racing through the twists and turns in one continuous shot. The set was dressed with weeds, grass, roots and large chunks of broken-wall sections to break up the evenness of the floor. Adding a wet down and creating puddles also helped a great deal. The large blocks and the fact that everything was built out of lightweight foam in varying thicknesses created the perfect opportunity to reconfigure hallways and corridors during shooting to satisfy additional scenes and sequences, as well as easily pulling walls for lighting and camera access.

In early camera and lighting tests, cinematographer Enrique Chediak tried to create a day-lighting look and a night-lighting look for the maze in a place where very little light would reach in the day and virtually no light at all at night. Instinctively, soft light seemed to be the logical approach given that direct light would rarely reach bottom of the narrow corridors. The soft-light tests washed out all the textures and detail so it was decided to use much more hard lighting within the maze.

Another element of the maze I was passionate about was having a sense of the mechanics—basically, how the maze worked. The maze had a lot of moving parts: giant gates that





opened and closed, walls that moved and shifted, massive blocks that would raise and lower. I wanted to expose the workings to the audience by putting gears and gear track on the outside of the walls and gates. The oversized gears and track also added a sense of weight to the large stone block elements, emphasizing that they weren't just effortlessly moving or rising. This also gave me another texture, and enabled me to continue using a rust color as a complement to all the hues of the stone.

The Glade

The scenes and settings in the Glade were particularly fun to do. I needed to create a cinematically interesting environment that the audience believed was built by a group of kids with few available resources. The village of huts, animal pens and gardens was constructed using materials harvested from the actual location, a secluded field in Jackson, Louisiana. The Set Designers produced one-plate elevations of the different huts and structures. It was important to have a range of styles and finishes, from crude to elaborate, to feel as though the structures were built by different Gladers with their own individual styles and levels of craftsmanship. I let the drawings be open for interpretation by the individual prop makers assigned to each. Set Decorator Jon Danniells and his team did a fantastic job building the makeshift elements such as hammocks, lanterns and primitive furnishings and tools that adorned the sets. Wes wanted the actors to go through a boot camp of sorts, actually living outside on the set to help develop their characters. Normally, I would be against people trampling a set before it was shot, let alone living in it, but in this case it added another wonderful layer to everything. While preparing food and using the fire pits, the actors gave it life. They gravitated to certain huts and sleeping areas and made them their own. Some even harvested materials and made themselves personal items, ranging from wood carvings and tools to stools and chairs. The set quickly evolved into an organic unity of form and function. It was important for the Glade to be a world that was far from a paradise, but reflected years of habitation and showed the engineering skills of the characters. Wes would always reiterate that everything in the Glade needed to look believable and not fantastical. I tried to accentuate function over form while still keeping a visual style. **ADG**

Marc Fisichella, Production Designer
Douglas Cumming, Art Director
Chris Craine, Jessica Navran, Assistant Art Directors
Wayne John Haag, Concept Artist
Landon Lott, Illustrator
Michelle C. Harmon, Wright McFarland, Set Designers
Jason Oertling, Charge Scenic Artist
Doug Brode, Joel Venti, Storyboard Artists
Jon Danniells, Set Decorator



Opposite page, clockwise from top: A pencil sketch by Mr. Fisichella of the elevator box that opens the film, carrying a disoriented Thomas up to the surface of the Glade. The production crew prepares to shoot Teresa's arrival in the elevator box. The elevator box set piece installed on location. The shaft scenes were done on stage but the box and doors were also installed at the Glade. The elevator itself couldn't move on location, but the inner cage rested on springs to give it some bounce and shake. The hydraulic doors opened to reveal the cage, and the large spinning cable wheel implied the elevator's movement beneath the ground. This page, top to bottom: A pair of four-foot-diameter gears for the mechanical gates, carved from foam and masterfully detailed by Scenic Artist Jason Oertling. The members of W.C.K.D. discuss the progress of the experiment in the lab's bunker boardroom, on stage at an empty Sam's Club store. A stark contrast to the Glade, the underground lab for W.C.K.D. is a combination of ultra-high-tech and subterranean military bunker.

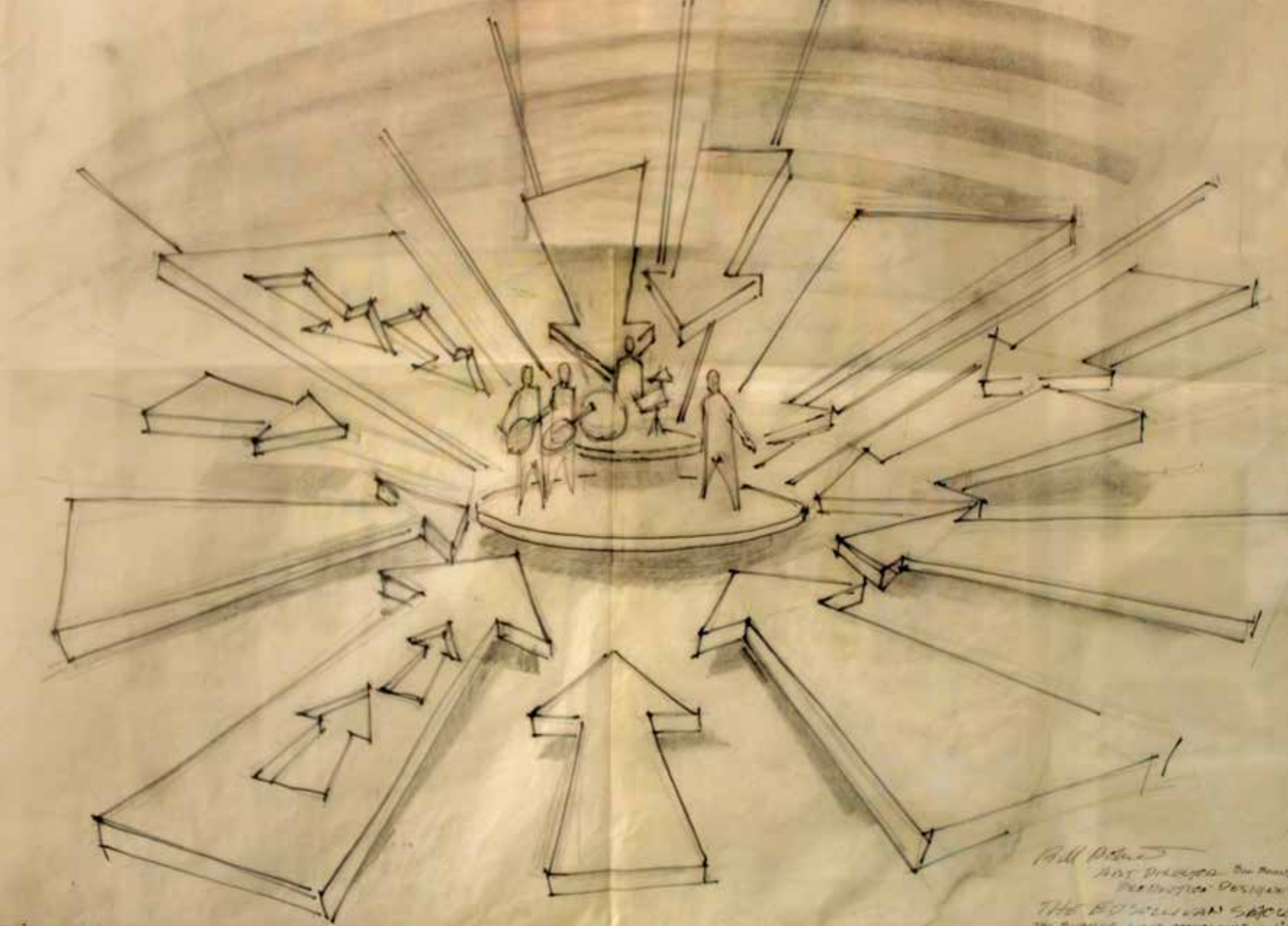


Bill Bohnert

by Raf Lydon, Production Designer and Art Director

Above: Raf Lydon talked with Mr. Bohnert in the latter's studio at home in Beverly Hills, CA. The photographs on the wall reflect his sixty-year career in television. Opposite page, top: The original pencil sketch on onion skin for the arrow set that became an important part of America's introduction to the Beatles. The sketch reflects the initial intention that all four members of the group stand on the platforms, but that plan was changed when the musicians wanted more room to move around. Bottom: A photograph of the performance taken from behind the studio audience.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' first appearance on US televisions, via three February 1964 episodes of CBS' Sunday-night *Ed Sullivan Show*. John, Paul, Ringo and George brought a fresh new musical feel to America through a series of electrifying performances that became part of the nation's cultural history.



The designs of the stage sets they performed on was innovative as well. Each captured the mood that spoke of the future. One of the most memorable of those designs was a set made up of multiple arrows pointing into a center point of the stage with a single raised platform for the drum kit. That arrow set is now forever linked in pop culture history with the first time the Beatles wowed America.

Emmy®-nominated Production Designer Bill Bohnert designed this memorable *Ed Sullivan Show* set which, along with many others, has left an influential mark on the look of variety television shows right up to the present day.

Bill's career in art and design started early. His father was the renowned commercial illustrator and fine artist, Herbert Bohnert, who was responsible for illustrating the advertisements for Dutch Boy Paint in the 1930s. He often used his young son Bill as the model for the Dutch boy in those illustrations. Bill grew up in a world of artists and gained a great command for the craft at an early age.



But he initially wanted a completely different career path: he studied nuclear fusion at MIT, before switching majors to graduate with a bachelor of architecture degree. He soon heard the siren call of the theater and added an MFA in stage design from the Yale School of Drama. Once in New York, his stage work got him noticed in the infant network television Art Departments, which were nearly all on the East Coast at the time, and in 1960 he interviewed for a job as the Assistant Art Director on the highly popular *Ed Sullivan Show*. Bill got the job and was quickly promoted to Art Director where he spent the next ten years 1960–1971 designing for Ed Sullivan. Influenced by Broadway theater design of the period and modernist paintings, he used lots of abstract shapes for set pieces, beveling their edges and working closely with the lighting director to cross light and front-light them.

I recently spoke to Bill to talk about the historic Beatles sets, his time on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and his long career.

Raf: So tell me about how the Beatles came to be on *The Ed Sullivan Show*; how big a deal was it?

Bill: Ed Sullivan and his wife Sylvia were in Heathrow Airport in London when they heard screaming fans trailing four young men who had just returned from a tour in Sweden. He was told that they were a singing group called the Beatles. He had no idea who they were, but he realized they must be something to have such a big following. He called his booking agent and had him track down their manager Brian Epstein. They settled on a deal for three appearances for \$10,000.

At the time none of us on the show had a clue how big this was. Our first hint was the mob of reporters that showed up for Saturday rehearsal. Even Ed showed up on Saturday, something he never did. He loved all the attention.

One of the sets I had designed was a backdrop with the Beatles' name spelled out in lights. Ed cut the set saying everyone knew who they were. I'm convinced he did it to show the reporters that he was the boss of the show.

When we got to the actual show day, there were 30,000 people in the street outside the theater, which only held about 1,200. Two girls got arrested for trying to climb down the air-conditioning ducts from the roof. We had

never seen such frenzy. During the Beatles' first number, two other girls had to be removed because they were caught masturbating with coke bottles. The screaming was deafening. The ratings for that first show were the highest in the history of television at that time: 73 million people watched.

The Beatles themselves seemed remarkably relaxed, just nice young men. Someone asked John Lennon why he was so popular and he replied, "If I knew that, I'd be a manager instead of a performer."

The week leading up to the first show was tough for me because I had to design two shows for the Beatles in New York and one show in Miami, Florida. The first show was live in New York but we were going to tape the second one the following Monday to be shown later, then go to Miami to do a live show the next Sunday. I had to do all this plus all the other acts for those three shows. I flew down to Miami for a survey midweek and came right back.

After the Monday taping, we all flew to Miami to set up for the next show. I had the set built in a tiny shop that had never built a set for television before. The show was to be done at the Deauville Hotel. In addition to the Beatles, Mitzi Gaynor, Allen & Rossi, and comedian Myron Cohen were going to be on.



Right: A photograph taken during rehearsal from the Sullivan Theater fly loft. Opposite page, top: A second set for the Beatles was designed in forced perspective, executed with colored plexiglass on a lightweight square steel tube frame, to direct the viewers' eye to the performers. Bottom: The forced perspective set was used on the cover of SOMETHING NEW in July 1964, the Beatles' third Columbia Records album.



“When we got to the actual show day, there were 30,000 people in the street outside the theater, which only held about 1,200. Two girls got arrested for trying to climb down the air-conditioning ducts from the roof.”

We had a meeting with the hotel security staff and the local police to tell them to prepare for large crowds. They poo-pooed us, saying not to worry because they knew what they were doing.

The night of the show came. We went on air live. Ed was supposed to announce the Beatles immediately, but the stage manager told him to go to commercial instead. The Beatles were not in the room, unable to get through the throng; the police were not ready for the crowds, as we feared. The police finally formed a wedge with the Beatles inside, and battled their way to the stage door. The commercial ended and Ed started his intro. When he finished, Ringo was just sitting down. But we got on.

Meanwhile, I was in the production truck, a control room on wheels, when I heard the roar of a crowd. All the people who could not get into the theater discovered our truck. I was standing behind the director looking at the monitors. I looked out the open door and saw this mob coming around the corner of the hotel. I shut the door just as the crowd hit. All during the show the control room rocked with people pushing against the truck trying to hear the show. I was worried that someone would get electrocuted or the show would be knocked off the air.





All's well that ends well. The show went off without a hitch. We all went to a dinner party with the Beatles afterward. I sat next to Ringo and he said he was a little sad because he knew this was the high point of his career and it would never get better than this.

The next Sunday, the show we had taped went on the air. It included the set that was later pictured on the cover of their third American album, *Something New*.

Raf: So let's talk more about the design of the famous Beatles arrow set; how did it come about? What was the idea behind the design?

Bill: The arrows came to mind because I simply felt we had to focus on the Beatles. These guys were the big deal so one should focus on them. What better way to focus on something than put arrows all around, pointing at them? So I designed the arrow set.

I also did the forced perspective set I mentioned before, which was used on one of their record album covers.

Again, forced perspective brought your eye into the center, and that's where the Beatles lived. I did several other sets during that same period, one of which was cut because we had no idea of the frenzy that was going to exist when the Beatles showed up.

Originally, I did a piece that had a circular platform in front and Ringo would have a higher platform to the back of that because I wanted him to have some good prominence and also to be above the heads of the other three. The arrows I designed as slightly three-dimensional objects; they were all about three inches thick and the ones in the background were hung from the theater's regular fly system. The counterweight would take them out when we weren't using them, but when they came in they would fly in further than the rigging would normally allow, because I wanted the points of the arrows to slide forward on the floor and the rear of the arrow to hang back against the cables so that way I could get the arrows to form a backdrop. The other arrows just simply laid on the floor pointing at the platforms. During rehearsal the Beatles weren't that thrilled to be up on my round platform; it was a little too tight, too crowded. They wanted to have more movement room so they stepped down just in front of the circular platform. The set still worked perfectly well with that minor change.

Raf: So was this platform slightly curved?

Bill: Well, they were standing on the floor as it had turned out. What I had anticipated was a round platform that was raised off the floor a few inches just to make it look like it was floating off the floor, but they got off of that as I said and stood on the floor itself 'cause the platform itself was just a little too small. They could have fit, but they wanted to be able to boogie a little and it didn't allow for that.

Raf: How important was the lighting to the design of the set?

Bill: Well, we had a cyclorama behind which is simply a big cloth that curved so you could shoot cross angles and still see a white background. The ground had a cove, it was called, a slanted piece of scenery that was standard in the studio for all of the shows, which would give you a slanted surface so you could light the floor, light the slanted surface and light the backdrop. the slanted cove hid the floor strip lights that were lighting the cyc but the attempt would be made to match the color value on the cyc with the slanted surface and the floor so it would look like an infinite background. That was only partially successful but it worked moderately well. Nowadays in commercials when they do an infinite background, they curve it right into the floor and light it all from the top.

Above: One of the numbers was performed using just the drum riser against the show's permanent hardwall, without a specific new backdrop.

Raf: Because it was shot in black and white, did you work in gray tones to have the arrows contrast with their suits?

Bill: The arrows themselves were off-white. We never did anything absolutely white in those black-and-white days because the cameras couldn't handle it. I always used #2 gray. They had a range, you know: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 up to 10. #2 was a very light gray but it read as white as far as the cameras were concerned, so that meant whatever they wore would stand out in front of it. That was never an issue on the forced perspective set; there I did use colored plexiglass pieces leading back into the forced perspective. They weren't going to interfere with the outfits, which were black jackets. The platform for Ringo was used for both sets, arrows and forced perspective. It was on wheels and it was also rolled in front of the Ed Sullivan hard wall set for one song.

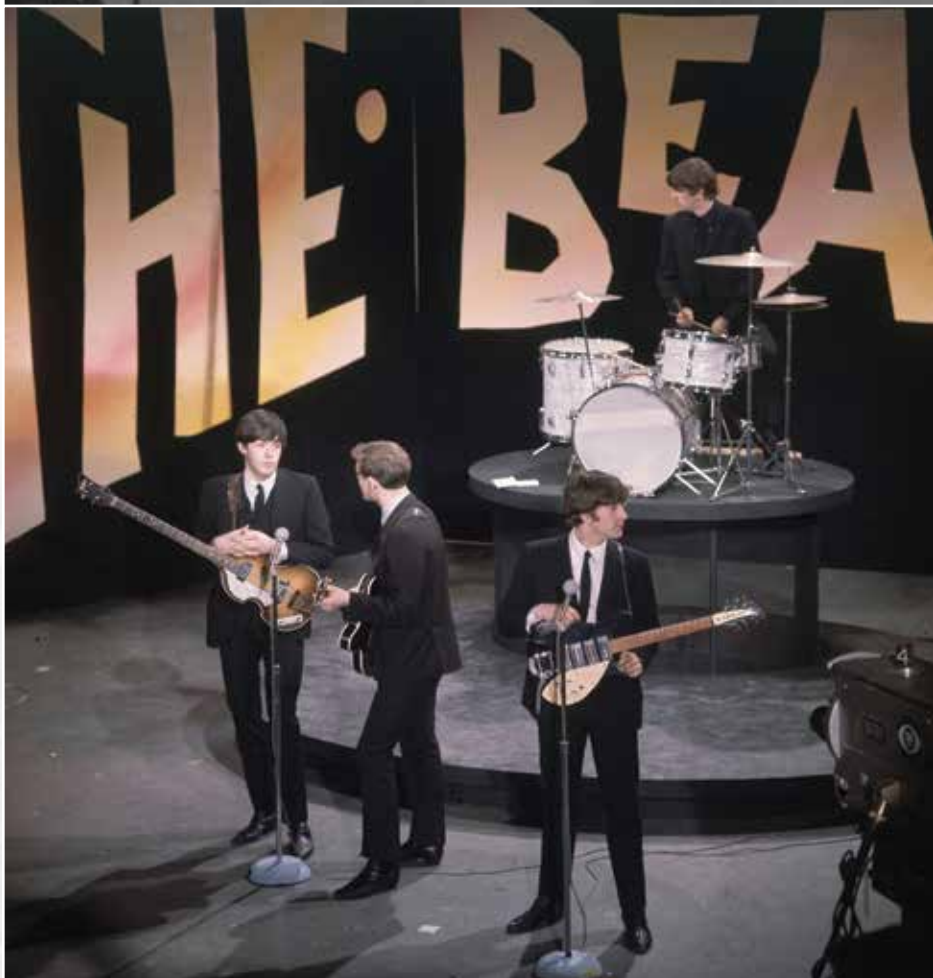
Bill Bohnert designed for literally hundreds of other acts on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, including the Doors, the Jackson 5, Diana Ross, the Rolling Stones, Duke Ellington and *Jerome Robbins' Ballet: U.S.A.* He is very proud of all the sets he designed for the show.

After *The Ed Sullivan Show* ended in 1971, Bill worked on *The Electric Company* for Children's Television Workshop for a time before moving to California on the new Bill Cosby variety show in the early 1970s. His career continued to flourish, and for three decades he designed major television and awards shows including *Donny and Marie*, *Dick Clark, America's Funniest Home Videos*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Hard Copy*, *The Golden Globes*, the Emmys and the CMA Awards.

Late in his career, Bill became a pioneer in the use of computers in the design process; he was an early adapter of the use of computer renderings and 3-D models to show producers at design presentations. He never feared the transition from hand drawings and paper models to computer-based documents. Going back to the 1950s, when he was a young man studying nuclear physics at MIT, he was fascinated by the early primitive room-sized computers and knew they would be the future.

He was one of the first designers to work in virtual reality television programming. He pioneered the use of green screen and computer animation, mixed with live action, on game shows such as CBS' *Secrets of the Cryptkeeper's Haunted House*, *Paranoia* for Nickelodeon and *Vortex* for the Massachusetts Lottery.

Now retired, Bill devotes his time to two new loves: making 3-D animated short films with Maya® and playing tennis three times a week. Staying involved, Bill has recently become interested in the use of 3-D printing in the design process. **ADG**



Top: The Beatles' contract provided for three appearances on the Sullivan show, which allowed Mr. Bohnert to design multiple sets for them, but the same drum riser was used throughout. Above: Ed Sullivan cut this set with the Beatles spelled out in lighted plexiglass because, he said, "Everyone knows who they are."



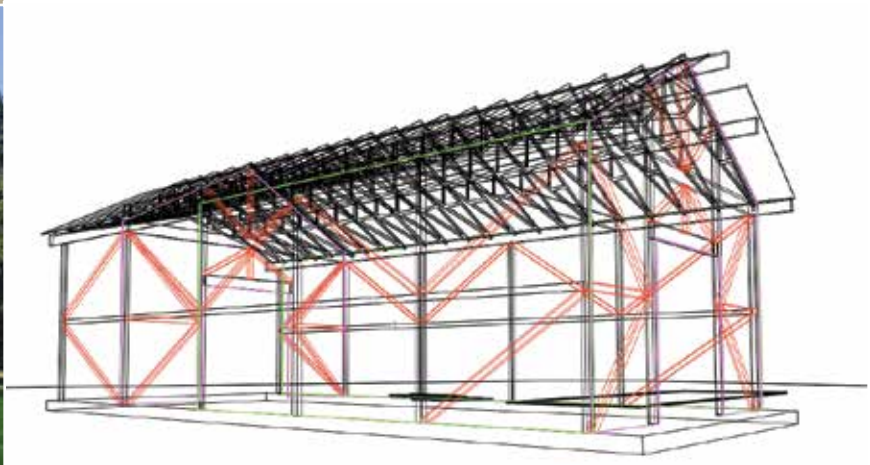


UTOPIA

by John Janavs,
Production Designer

Visions of ultra modern, net zero, sustainable, earth-sheltered and solar-powered fantasies danced through my imagination when I first got the call to design Fox's new reality show *Utopia*. Little did I realize that there would be broad debate among the show's producers as to what exactly utopia was. To some utopia meant nature with no architecture at all, others saw it as post-apocalyptic, and to at least one, a fully stocked bar was enough.

Left: This is the first view of UTOPIA the cast gets as the gates swing open, an epic opening shot. Even this gate structure was required to be engineered and permitted by the city of Santa Clarita.





What we all did know was the premise: the show is about a group of people, fourteen to start with, who have grown dissatisfied with society and have chosen to step away and start their own society, their own vision of utopia.

I had only an outline of a program: I needed a structure to accommodate livestock, a building that could house the cast, a one-acre lake, a waterfall, agricultural space and the ability to expand this across five acres in the Santa Clarita canyons. All of the action in these spaces would be monitored 24/7 only by 132 robotic cameras over the course of an entire year. Digest that for a moment. It's an unprecedented scope for a television series: a continuous year, no cameramen on set, sets that must withstand weather and 50 mph winds for a year, no infrastructure for the underlying technology to plug into.

I was able to distill all the various opinions to seven very different style boards. That's when I realized that we were all missing the point: rather than allowing the cast to create their own utopia, we were already charting the course for them. So, to allow the cast to move into a future of their own making, we stepped back and created a found environment based, more or less, on traditional barn architecture. From this skeletal start the cast could determine their own direction.

What seemed like a relatively simple design task grew progressively more complex as I realized what was required to pull this off, start to finish, in three months. Among the challenges:

Opposite page, top: Mr. Janavs writes, "I climbed to the top of the water tower to measure the length of cross beams needed to support the truss tower guides. You can see how this is an ideal spot from which to illuminate the entire site. At a total of about 150' above our site, the view is astounding. The shot gives a sense of how immense the scale of the project was. The main building roof is just barely visible center right of the shot behind the trees. Lower images, clockwise from upper left: The site looking south from the edge of the pond up toward where the main house will be. Although the site had been cleared of debris, it wasn't yet secured as you can tell by the cow wandering across. A Vectorworks® study of one variation of the main building design—hints of the final version are clearly there. Another Vectorworks 3D model of a pure post-and-beam structure was created for the main building to illustrate to the engineers what Mr. Janavs wanted to do, but it was subsequently changed to a hybrid, shear wall and post-and-beam structure to meet code requirements. Another Vectorworks model, overlaid on a site photograph with Photoshop® enhancements showing pretty much the final version of the main building. Above: An early pass at camera placement across the site. The production started with 132 active cameras and buried cable to accommodate ten more if needed as the show evolved. All the cabling for power, camera and audio had to be planned and trenched before the site could be finished—it looked like a spider web.



Top: The main structure looking south a few days before taping began. The skylight on the ridge of the building as well as the slatted rolling sidewalls helped balance contrast between interior and exterior. Above: Treated foundation piles set in concrete for the foundation of the main building. The entire structure was engineered to California seismic standards and wind speeds of 115 mph. Above, right: The main building half-framed. Mr. Janavs writes, "Although I wanted it to be purely post and beam, the building code would not allow it. To approximate the look, I positioned shear walls in key places while leaving true post and beam visible in others. I chose a scissor truss for the center of the structure to accentuate the 27' height." Right: The main gate looking toward the house about halfway through construction.

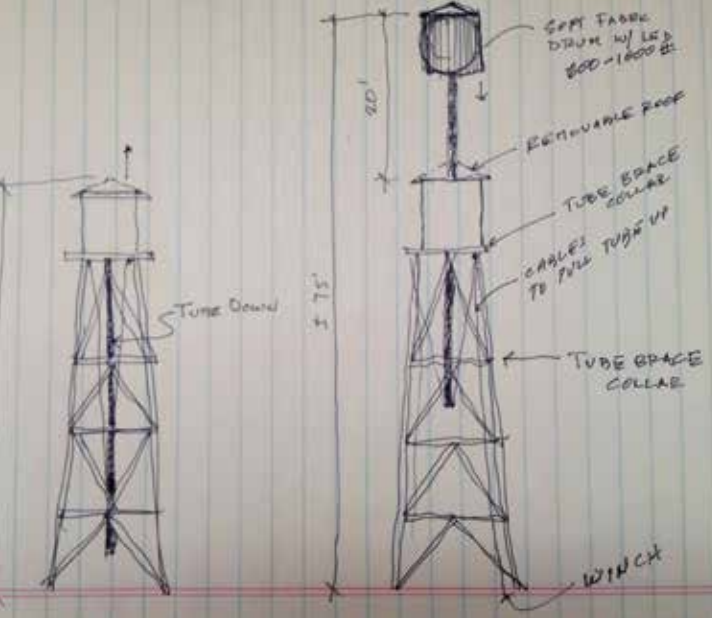




“This aspect of reality television is what I love the most: there is no script to follow; what we do as designers guides many story paths, creates conflicts, provides options for the cast and occasionally solves technical challenges for other departments. Some of these things are discussed with the producers and others are woven into the design, just knowing that human nature will take it somewhere interesting.”



Top, left: The interior of the main building was intended to look raw and legitimately used and weathered. Mr. Janav's biggest fear was that he wouldn't be able to make the cameras inconspicuous. This shot has 14 cameras in it. To help hide the equipment he developed different printed textures that were wrapped around the camera housings to help them blend in with whatever background they were against. Right: The crate wall in the main building was Scott Moses' vision, designed to look like stacked produce crates, giving a richly textured wall that also provides storage in a manner that looked natural. Full or empty, it's a terrific background. Left: The floor plan of the main building with a camera plot showing 42 cameras inside this one space. The furniture layout was only there to suggest one possible way that the cast might use the space so the director could rough out camera placement for activity that could only be guessed at. The Art Department's most daunting task was to try to make this many cameras inconspicuous.



Building Codes

Because the cast was living on-site for an extended period of time, the film commission decided we needed to have building department approval and permits for our sets, which required engineering for all the structures and a formal plan check. The Santa Clarita Building Department adjusted quickly, after realizing that as a set, none of this could really follow the codes to the letter and that basic safety was the important thing. At the end of our initial meeting the plan checker nodded and asked, "OK, so after the drawings are finished, can I have about two weeks to review them?" I smiled and said, "I can give you two days." After a pause, "OK."

The fire department wasn't as clear on how to deal with us. Was this set subject to the rules of film shoots, or was this a house? Ultimately, after endless meetings and changes (after construction had already begun), the fire department largely required compliance with both sets of regulations, specifying both a pyrotechnic staff and fire safety officer on set, a fire hydrant on-site, fully sprinklered living structure (not just with residential sprinklers, but a commercially sized system—specified only after the first was already installed), and a suction hydrant that could draw water from the new lake. Nevermind that a fire station is within a couple of thousand feet of the set. Given that the site is in a high fire danger location, and the cast has, at least initially, no means to heat their environment or cook without fire, the concern was understandable. The irony is that any camper could light a fire in the next canyon with no scrutiny or sprinklers.



Landscaping

Laying power and control cable for 132 cameras and microphones across the site, as well as a ground sprinkler system, meant a spider web of trenching throughout the area, and the destruction of almost all vegetation other than the grand old oak trees. This required replanting the entire five-acre site prior to the shoot and hoping it had enough time to grow in naturally while crews constantly trekked across everything. The planting needed to look not only lush and mature, but native plants were also selected that were edible, fruit trees and vegetables ready to sprout so that the cast would have some initial sustenance. All this was designed to ensure the site changed over the course of a year and constantly provided new color and new food sources.

Lighting

Nighttime exterior lighting was a unique challenge. My goal in designing reality shows has always been to make the technology disappear, to hide the cameras and lighting from the cast. Lighting designer Oscar Dominguez wanted to give the site a moonlit cast at night. To create that, he needed a primary light source on an adjacent ridge to function as a moon. The cost of a condor for a year was prohibitive and unattractive, and the high winds created challenges for balloon lights. I suggested an 80' water tower where the tank at the top would split open at night to reveal his light. Done...except: in plan check the building department decided this was a permanent structure and therefore limited to 56' in height; not high enough for the light to reach over trees and cover the site as intended. I saw the water tower as an icon for the entire set and wasn't about to give it up. The solution, I decided, was to make the tower grow on command. A vertical truss was built into the center of the tower that at night would be motored 30' straight up, taking the tower roof with it. In the morning, it would neatly slide back down to seal the water tank inconspicuously. It works brilliantly.

The buildings were designed to facilitate lighting as well. The robotic cameras have a limited contrast range and a well-lit interior was critical to keep shots in balance as the cast moves about. Both Oscar and I wanted to keep show lighting to a minimum, so the solution, along with a ridge skylight, was to design



Opposite page, top to bottom: Mr. Janavs: "I sketched the idea for the extending water tower light while on the phone with the lighting designer. His response was 'Ok, when you come back to Earth, tell me how we're going to solve this.' I prefer to work with my mind and my feet off the ground. Inside the water tower looking up. The truss is raised by a chain motor extending the light at the top to a height of 76 feet. To provide a light on the top of the adjacent hill to illuminate the site at night, I suggested a water tower that would open to expose the light. This would not only provide an striking visual element for the show, but would be cheaper and more stable than renting a giant snorkel lift for a year. A poetic shot of the water tower light extended just before nightfall. Above, top to bottom: A Vectorworks rendering of the stable with chicken coop. Mr. Janavs says, "3D models allow me to quickly rotate around the structure and check the look. I still prefer actual physical models if time allows because you can make a computer lie in a hundred ways that a real model never will." The stable was engineered and permitted, built on a full slab foundation and framed like a house. The stable half complete; this structure also contained the primary camera, water and power distribution structure on the back side where it was accessible to the staff but invisible to cast.



Top: The purpose of this tree was to provide a natural looking camera and microphone mount to cover action in the lake. Scott Moses found this huge dead oak on-site and had it dragged over to the lake. It took about three hours to position and stabilize the two giant trunks that make this assemblage. Above, left: The lake has been dug, and is being lined with chicken wire to prevent rodents from digging under and through the pond liner. Piping for the lake filtering system is in the foreground. Pumping the lake water through this bog, filled with sand and water plants, cleans and aerates the pond with no other system or chemicals needed. Right: The Gradall excavator in the middle of the lake gives a sense of scale of the undertaking; it would be fully submerged if the lake were full. Every single rock, around the lake and throughout the site, was placed by hand and machine.



“All of the action spaces would be monitored 24/7 only by 132 robotic cameras over the course of an entire year. Digest that for a moment. It’s an unprecedented scope for a television series: a continuous year, no cameramen on set, sets that must withstand weather and 50 mph winds, no infrastructure for the underlying technology to plug into.”

slatted sliding doors and wall panels that admit light throughout the space. Opening the sliding doors also allows the afternoon breeze, typical to those canyons, to naturally cool the interior space while outdoors in the sun the temperature could reach 104 degrees.

The Lake

Although the site had a natural depression that functioned as a seasonal pond, *Utopia* needed a lake deep enough to swim in and be stocked with fish to provide another source of food for the cast. To that end, the pond was enlarged and deepened to eight feet, set with a pond liner and bedded with sand. A fourteen-foot waterfall and a planted sand bog were built to filter and aerate the water naturally. Every single rock, plant, and even the giant tree that has “fallen” into the lake were placed by hand, as often for technical reasons as for aesthetics. Fortunately, the site provided plenty of rock and tremendous old dead oaks to scavenge from, in sizes that could never have been trucked in.

Set Dressing

Details, details, details. Every piece of set dressing was evaluated for what the cast could or might do with it. As much as this is a social experiment, it’s still television and there’s a story to be told, and a cast that can’t be entirely abandoned. Art Director Scott Moses worked with the producers to review all the items left on set to determine how they helped or hindered the story that

might unfold. While things had to be provided that would help the cast survive, we didn’t have to make it obvious or easy. For example, there is a water line, but alas, it has no proper tap. The old tractor, left casually in the field, is fully functional if you know how to fix it. I think Scott is still carrying the ignition points in his pocket.

As a Production Designer, this aspect of reality television is what I love the most. There is no script to follow; what we do as designers guides many story paths, creates conflicts, provides options for the cast and occasionally solves technical challenges for other departments. Some of these things are discussed with the producers and others are woven into the design, just knowing that human nature will take it somewhere interesting. To do all that in a way that feels like we’ve never interfered is the ultimate testament to our work. **ADG**

Top left: A view across the just-filled lake toward the partially built front gate. You can get a sense of how effective the bog filter is when you look at the after photos. Right: About two weeks before completion, the water tower is still wrapped in scaffold and the four acres of hydroseed is starting to sprout. Bottom: The main building at sunrise shows how Mr. Janavs sited the structures to capitalize both on the majesty and the shade that the 100+ year-old oaks provide.



FURY

by Peter Russell, Supervising Art Director



From the outset it was clear that David Ayer's production of *Fury*, a hard-hitting story of 24 hours in the life of an American tank crew in the latter days of World War II, was going to be a unique project.





Previous pages: A detail from Production Designer Andrew Menzies' illustration of a proposal for the crossroads location. This page, top: The completed mill building at the crossroads set, dressed with FURY's signature material: mud. Above: A screen capture of a shot over Fury as the tank approaches the crossroads.

David's primary requirement of the Art Department was to provide total authenticity in everything that was put in front of camera. His enthusiasm for the subject, and vast knowledge of the period, meant the environments had to go far beyond the usual film artifice. Even the production meetings had the feel of military briefings, with the generals giving an overview of what could best be described as a limited engagement that would definitely be "over by Christmas."

So, armed with a mountain of reference and enough military experts to invade a small country, we advanced.

The production was split between two bases. The first group of locations was centered around the village of Shirburn in Oxfordshire. Prior to the film company's arrival, the town hadn't heard gunfire since the English civil war. This is where most of the battle scenes were staged, as well as a large battalion headquarters sequence on farmland close by. This gave David the opportunity to illustrate the human and logistical chaos of the advance across Germany toward Hitler's Berlin. For the filmmakers it was the first encounter with the real enemy...mud.

"Even the production meetings had the feel of military briefings, with the generals giving an overview of what could best be described as a limited engagement that would definitely be 'over by Christmas.'"

Fury is not the first production to use sodden earth as an efficient and dramatic way to transform a bucolic landscape into an apocalyptic wasteland, but seldom before has it been quite this down and dirty. It was not unusual to watch the guys who jet-washed the vehicles turn their attention to another nearby pile of mud, only to reveal it to be...the set dressing gang.

The production secured many of the military vehicles featured in the film from private collectors and

Top: Scouting the crossroads location at Shirburn Farm in Oxfordshire. Center: Built from steel and concrete block to withstand several nights of controlled burns, the crossroads' mill building is shown here under construction. Right: A photograph by writer/director David Ayer, behind the scenes at the crossroads set.





Above, top: A SketchUp® model by Mr. Menzies of the exterior of the constructed town set. Center: A 3D model by Art Director Mark Scruton, who supervised the town set. Right: A plan of the German town set, generated from Mr. Menzies' same SketchUp model.



enthusiasts. Though this resulted in access to a vast array of equipment, it came with one inherent drawback: most of the vehicles had been lovingly restored with hundreds of hours of painstaking labor. To get them to look like war-damaged veterans required a sort of reverse car wash. The tanks and jeeps entered pristine, had latex painted over any decals or incorrect lettering, and then went through a muddy spray. Many a worried owner had to be consoled by the not-always-believed assurance, "Don't worry, it will wash off."

While at Shirburn, a large sawmill set was constructed at an existing rural crossroads. To give strategic importance to the junction, as part of the climax of

the film, this structure was designed to be engulfed in flames by degrees during the course of the final battle. Getting the mill to burn was never an issue, but keeping it burning over four nights was much more of a challenge. Rather than risk building with flame-retarded wooden materials, which might allow the fire to progress too far, we chose instead a steel-framed structure with concrete block infill. Faux wooden joinery details were manufactured from steel and then finished scenically.

The second unit base was a disused World War II airfield near Bovingdon in Hertfordshire. The film's construction shops were here as well as the exterior of a



Above: Another view of Mr. Menzies' SketchUp model of the town exterior set, generated from the point of view of the arrows on the previous groundplan. **Left:** A screen capture of Fury's entrance into the town square, from the same point of view as the SketchUp illustration.



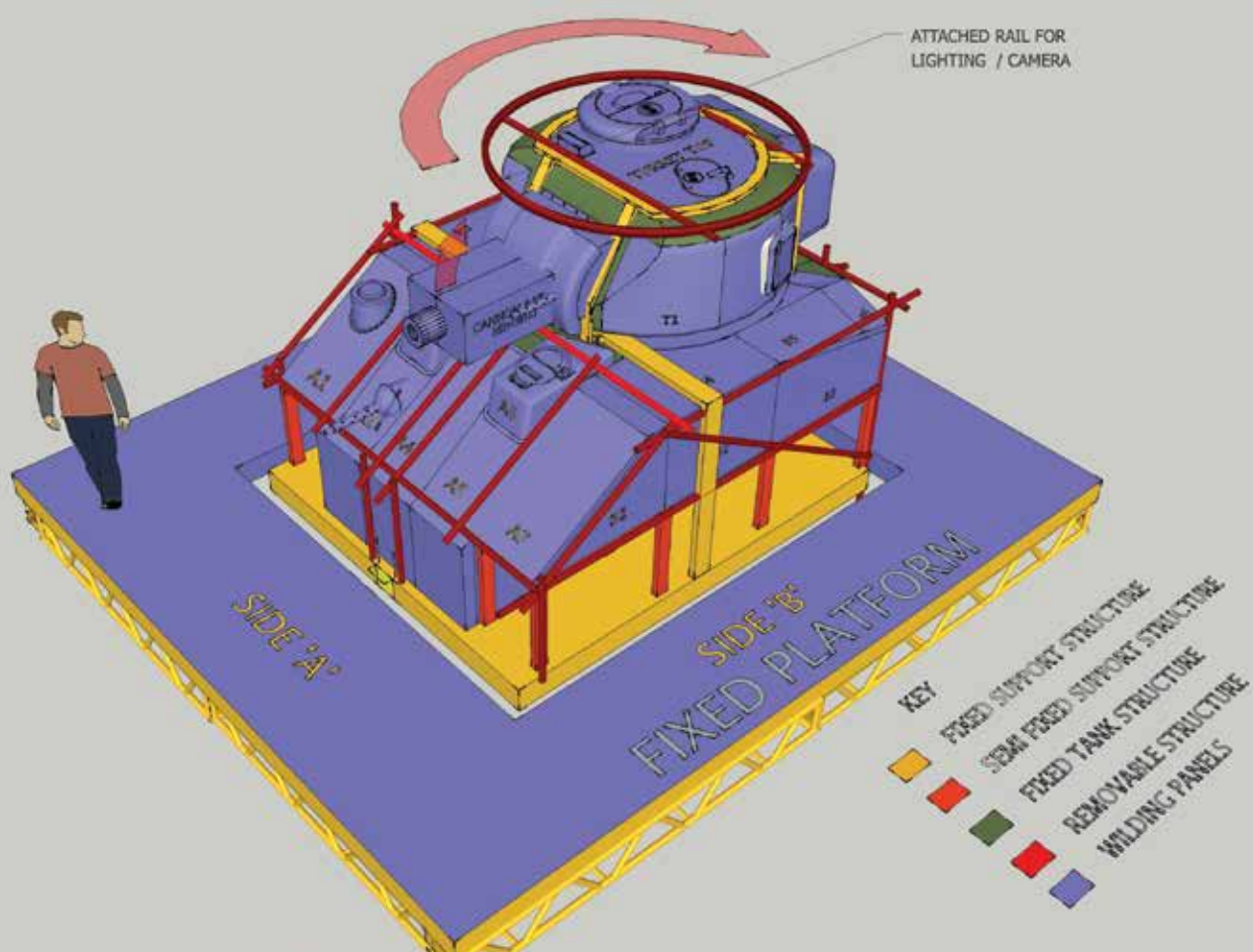
large German town set. One of the old runway holding areas gave a solid surface, strong enough to take the weight of several tracked vehicles.

“A fight sequence was filmed between three Sherman tanks and Tiger 131, the last surviving German Tiger in the world and described by an expert as the Mona Lisa of tanks.”

Top: A set photo of the battlefield, shot near Bovingdon in Hertfordshire. Mr. Menzies wanted this set to be a homage to the First World War. **Above:** Writer/director David Ayer took many photos of the production, occasionally giving them a period filter to check the authenticity of the set design. This particular one is of a mortar hit on a stores tent. **Opposite page, top:** The fabricated Tiger tank in the paint shop. **Center:** The trench battle sequence between four Sherman tanks and the German Tiger. In reality, the Tiger could fire a round, with a flat trajectory, from two kilometers away and not only penetrate through one Sherman but two, whilst a Sherman's 76mm round couldn't penetrate the main front or side armor of the Tiger, even at point-blank range. **Bottom:** The exterior of the battalion headquarters set, also at Shirburn Model Farm in Oxfordshire. Fury is in the foreground, entering the camp.

It was also at Bovingdon that a fight sequence was filmed between three Sherman tanks and Tiger 131, the last surviving German Tiger in the world and described by an expert as the Mona Lisa of tanks. Held in the collection of the Royal Tank Regiment Museum, it was certainly the most valuable action vehicle I have ever worked with, and was treated more like a superstar than an ageing battlewagon.





Above: A SketchUp model of the Fury's turret, drawn by Production Designer Andrew Menzies. This was the very first model to encourage conversation about the needs of the interior of the tank. Below, left: A photograph of the interior of the finished set. Right: The turret set with walls wilded for shooting. The set was supervised by Assistant Art Director Gary Jopling (seen in picture).

The title character, Fury, and her sister tanks were the stars of the show. Against current movie practice, real examples of the Shermans not fabricated copies were used. This had an instant impact on set as these monsters tracked and skidded around the countryside. It also gave the film's action vehicle team many a late night keeping them running. The Art Department provided the principal tanks their own personalities by customizing how each was set up and dressed everything from what additional protection they deployed to where they hung their kit bags. To facilitate filming, two copies of *Fury* were produced from the tracks up, one on a modern tracked chassis, the other on wheels. Depending

“For the filmmakers it was the first encounter with the real enemy...mud. It was not unusual to watch the guys who jet-washed the vehicles turn their attention to another nearby pile of mud, only to reveal it to be...the set dressing gang.”





on the conditions of the terrain or required camera angles, these were interchangeable with the real tank.

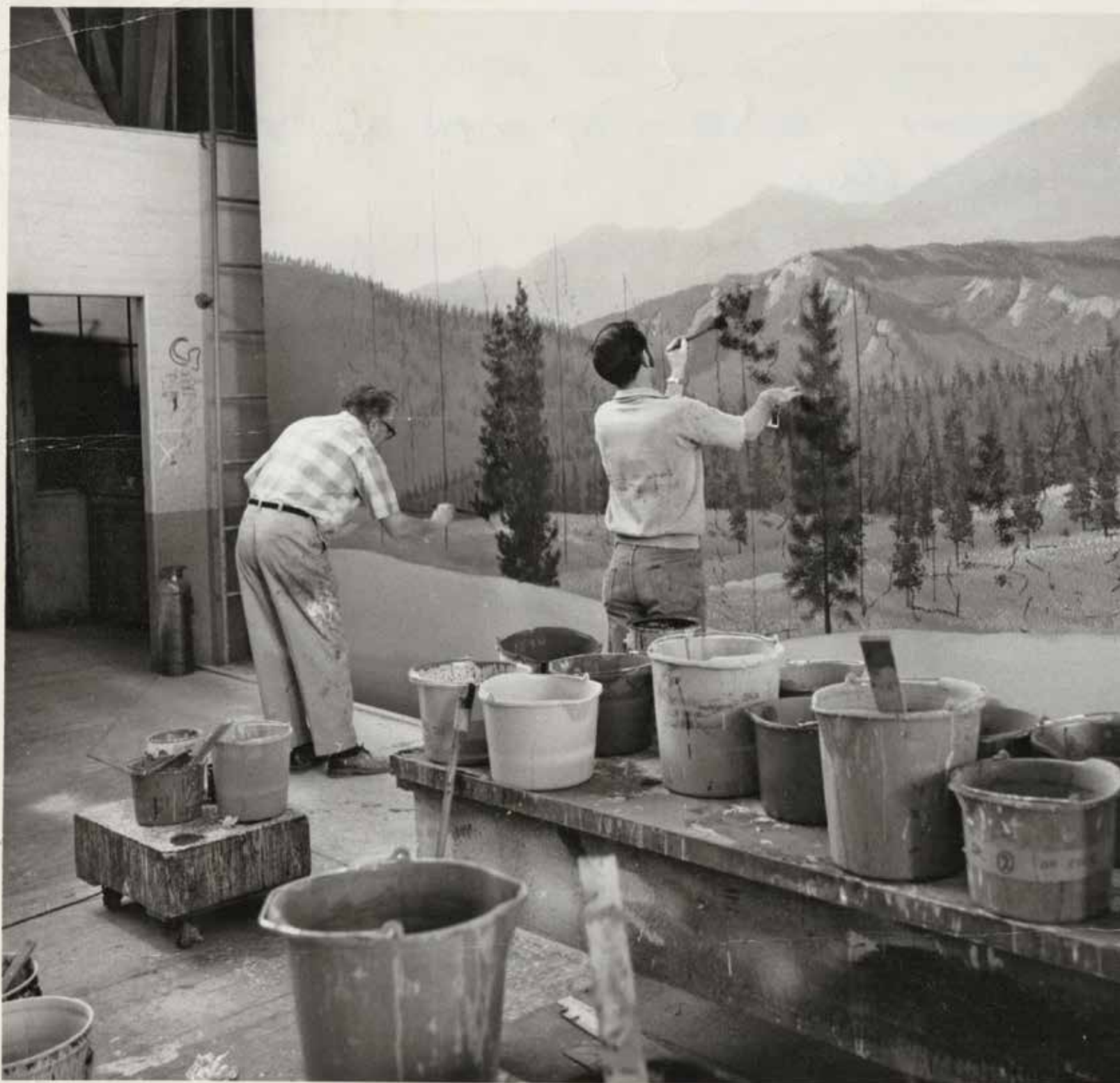
As is often the case, the smallest set turned out to be the most challenging. A fair percentage of the action takes place inside the Fury, so an interior set was built on a motion base to facilitate filming in such a confined area. In conjunction with the special effects department, the set was made practical in every imaginable way, including a fully articulated turret and recoil mechanism for the main armament. The set was constructed from a series of panels to allow universal camera access. It formed the visual home for the five lead actors, and one of the only places in the film where they could express their characters' identities.

Fury was an extraordinarily demanding project for both those in front and behind the camera. After three weeks of rocking and rolling, with cannons firing and machine guns blazing, the set began to take on a personality and an aroma all of its own, a bit like *Das Boot* meets *Apollo 13*. **ADG**

Andrew Menzies,
Production Designer
Peter Russell,
Supervising Art Director
Phil Harvey, Mark Scruton,
Art Directors
Graham Ward,
Standby Art Director
Gary Jopling,
Assistant Art Director
Wes Nike, Illustrator
Anthony Noble,
Graphic Designer

Tilly Scandrett, Chloe Taylor,
Graphic Artists
Mark Harris, Wolfgang Metschan,
Digital Set Designers
Tara Ilsley, Draughtsperson
Kevin J.J. Hill,
Junior Draughtsperson
Robert J. Dugdale, Natalie Laws,
Scenic Artists
Andrew Garcia-Price,
Storyboard Artist
Lee Gordon, Malcolm Stone,
Set Decorators

Above, clockwise from top left: Images of the construction of the tanks. Mr. Menzies writes, "These are some interesting images of how the process Fury tanks were reproduced, identical to the hero Fury tank from the tracks up. It's a technique not done a lot in the US; they call it "making a squeeze" which involves, basically, giant molds of the tank using latex and then fiberglassing into those molds. The end product is a faithful reproduction of the real tank, including every ding, scratch and texture, until you feel it's not fiberglass but actual steel. Then a much lighter reproduction Fury (weighing in at maybe 6 tons) had to be built to behave like a 30-ton Sherman. These were all supervised by Art Director Phil Harvey, whom we called Tank."





Scenic Artist Oral History Project:

A heritage explored and recovered

by Karen L. Maness and Richard M. Isackes

"Actually, all my art classes and everything never got me as far as scenic art got me."

—Wilbur Ferrell

In a world where the practice of Scenic Art is undergoing dynamic change, the Scenic Artists must act, by virtue of personal style and sensibility, as a bridge between tradition and innovation. Irrespective of the advances in technology, it is the living artist in direct contact with the image that ensures the humanity of the practice and its products. In the words of Edvard Munch, "The camera will never compete with the brush and palette until such time as photography can be taken to Heaven and Hell." To understand our future it is essential that we remember and understand our past, and an important part of this history is the legacy of training, wherein the master artists of each generation teach those who follow them. By honoring this legacy we will ensure both the spirit and standards of the craft.

This summer marked the sixth visit by Karen Maness to Los Angeles, where much of this history has been revealed in interviews with Scenic Artists for the Art Directors Guild's Scenic Artist Oral History project. The following artists have been interviewed to date: Wilbur Ferrell, Chris Koon, Pat DeGreve, Denis Olsen, Michael Denering, Ron Strang, Ed Strang, John Moffitt, Gary Coakley, Chris Coakley, Joe Francuz, Bill Anderson, Don MacDonald, Don Hanson, John Stewart, Gary Thomas, Jim Katranis, Marion Dies, Bridget Duffy, Marian Westall, Andy MacPhee, Pietro Palladini, Eddie Martinez, Terry Peterson and Francine West.

Through research, family documents, stories and interviews, co-authors Karen Maness and Richard Isackes are documenting the contributions and influence of Hollywood's most accomplished Scenic Artists, including George Gibson, Ben Carré, F. Wayne Hill, Harry Tepker, Clem Hall, Bill McConnell, Verne Strang, Ben Tipton, Art Rider, Leo Atkinson, Bob Oberbeck, Jim Dobson, Duncan Alanson Spencer, John H. Coakley, Bill Jekel, Clark Provins, Michael Provins, Jerry Gebr, Gordon Butcher, Benjamin Resella, Warren Ferrell, Hans Burkhardt, Bob Woolfe, Marvin DeChellis, Les Grimes and Eric Obregon.

Wilbur Ferrell (on right) and Clark Provins (left) painting a backing for BONANZA (from the Wilbur Ferrell Collection)



This page, top: Benjamin Resella (on right) and Bob Oberbeck (left) laying out the drawing for an ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE FOREVER backing. (from the Benjamin Resella Family Collection) Right: From left, Warren Ferrell, Jimmy Finger, Bob Oberbeck, Jake Henshaw and Gordon Butcher working at Warner Bros. Studio; Clem Hall is painting in the background. (from the Strang Family Collection) Opposite page: F. Wayne Hill (on left) and Duncan Allanson Spencer (right) painting the Grand Canyon mural for Disneyland's steam train ride in 1954. (from the Bill Anderson Collection)

The education of these artists was varied. Most of the earliest Hollywood Scenic Artists came from theater and many trained in the great scene painting studios of New York, Europe and England. Some in the next generation had the opportunity to work alongside the master painters of the Golden Age, such as those who were trained in the MGM scene painting shop under George Gibson's strict supervision, where end-of-day critiques

and plein-air painting trips on the weekends were required. Gordon Butcher remembers, "Do you want to learn how to draw trees? Go out and draw trees. Want to learn how to paint trees? Go out and paint trees. Hell no, you could not get that out of a god dang book." Others learned their techniques by restoring and replicating backdrops painted by prior generations or by apprenticing with elder Scenic Artists in other

studios. Whatever the path, the young artist in this system started at the bottom washing buckets and only by slow observation and hard work acquired the necessary technical skill to become a journeyman artist. Scenic Artist Gary Coakley, co-founder and past president of J.C. Backings observed, "I have graduates from art schools and other very good artists who come here and say, 'I can do that.' I try to explain to them that, 'Yes eventually you probably could, but it's going to take you a good seven years before you can do it on your own.' And they don't believe me."

The purpose of this article is to share with the reader some of the interviews given by elder statesmen of the industry where, in their own words, they reflect upon what influenced their careers.

Mike Denering remembers his days with J.C. Backings at the Fox Studio where they also rented the scenic backings. When the backings were returned, they often needed repair and touching up.

"There were thousands of backings that went back to King Kong. They would put these things up and you would work on them and you had to understand what originally was done. You had to tie it in so you wouldn't make it look like it was tied in. It had to be fixed without showing. So you had to deconstruct how the process was [done]. For someone to have that opportunity to see each backing...it really taught you more than you could possibly imagine."

Ron Strang talks about some of the artists who trained him.

One of the best in the business was Duncan Spencer, who went by the name of D. Allanson Spencer. He came from MGM, and was working at Warner's for a while—he showed me a lot of things. He worked very effortlessly. What he did was magnificent and it came with such ease that I was really influenced [by him]. He taught me lots of tricks. Made things go easier, faster and better. He taught me how to paint bricks in buildings with a big brush; everybody else was doing it with little tiny brushes, the effect was actually better with the bigger brush, and faster.

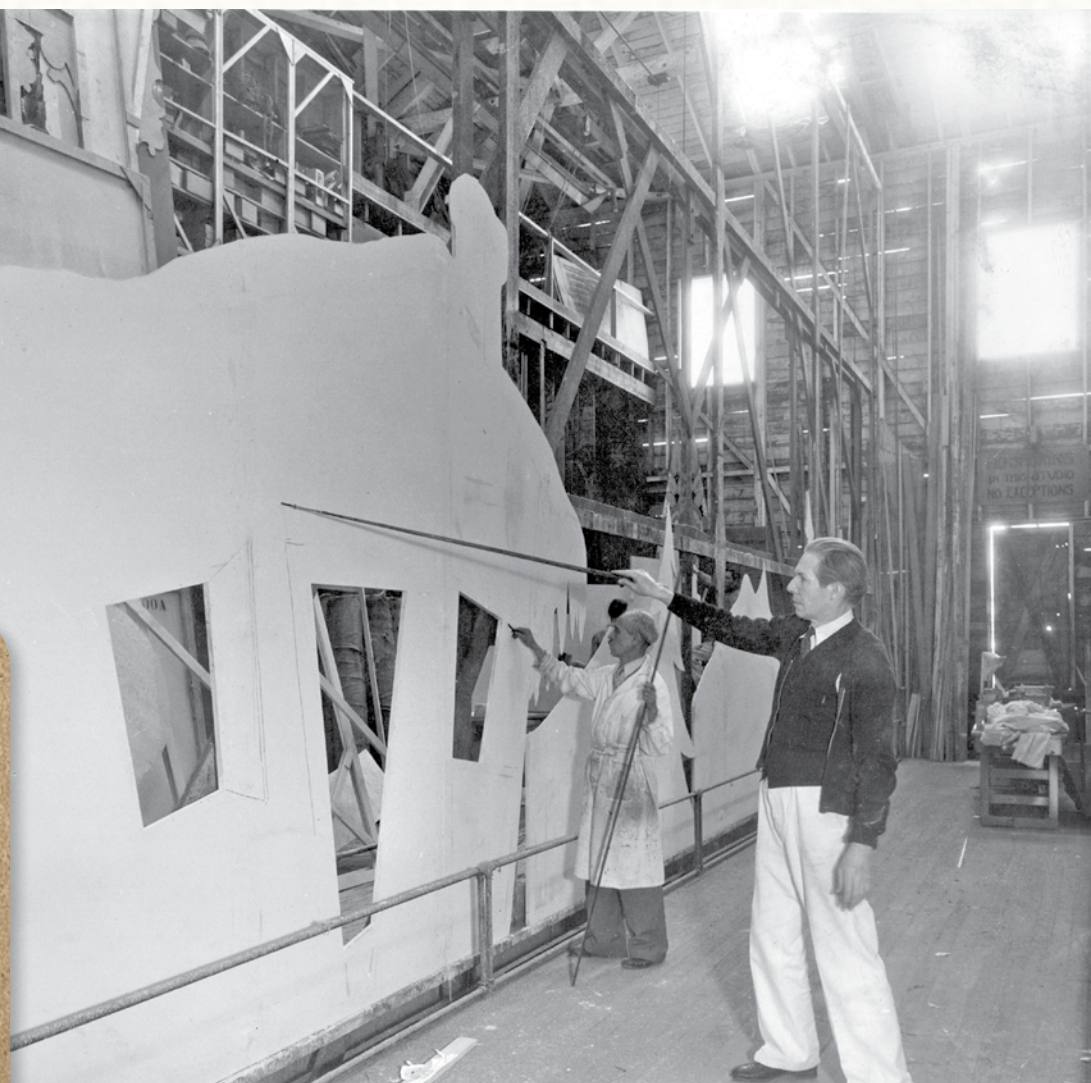


Then Clark Provins was at MGM. He had a tremendous knowledge of the scenic business. The whole business: the perspective, the painting techniques; Clark was one of the best. He told me that there was a guy, by the name of Ben Carré, at MGM, a little French guy that came from France pretty early in the game, you know what you're really missing is good drawing. He knew all the theory of doing perspective mechanically and mathematically, and they concentrated on getting really good, accurate drawing that you would get in nature, and then transferred to the set on the soundstage. Clark thought that Carré's contributions were exceptional.

Clark was a prince. He liked to share knowledge and he had a lot of knowledge.

"John Coakley—and most people knew this if they worked around him—was a guy who could just step up to the palette with a Dutch brush and put one color in one side, and one color on the other, kind of mush it together a little bit, walk up to the drop and paint a picture."

“Duncan Spencer taught me how to paint bricks in buildings with a big brush; everybody else was doing it with little tiny brushes, the effect was actually better with the bigger brush, and faster.”



Clark shared his knowledge of perspective, the camera work has different lenses, and I did not understand quite how that worked. He said, “If the picture is the same, it’s exactly the same because you are standing in exactly the same spot. He said the only difference is if you’ve got the long lens in, it’s going to crop it and you’re not going to see as much of the picture. You are just going to see the part that telephotos up, so the perspective is identical.” And I’ve never forgot that. Another trick that Clark taught me: sometimes when you paint a moon on a backdrop, he said, “If you take a key, like a front-door key, the kind that has a circle in it, and you hold it at arm’s length, the moon would fit in that hole. When you are taking a picture of a backing, and you know where a camera’s going to be, you know how big to make the moon.”

In Wilbur Ferrell’s interview he remembers Bob Oberbeck and others.

I learned more from Bob Oberbeck than from almost anybody that I could imagine. Even today, I still follow what he taught me. Things like reflected light,

bounce light off of the bottom, how you can—instead of painting something and making it look like a dollhouse—you bounce light off of the ground. You change color without really changing color, like glazing over things; those are things I had never thought of when I first started painting. You know to me a wall was a wall. He showed me how to wet edge to soften an edge, what should be the darkest, how shadows are, how deep a shadow should be, those kinds of things, all of that glazing and when things disappear, when texture disappears, and when it is unnecessary on a painting, and which colors disappear first. Yellow disappears first, you know, those kind of things, and how to put atmosphere into how you paint, keep bringing in the sky color into your color until you get your distance, and also playing color against color. [...] Actually, all my art classes and everything never got me as far as Scenic Art got me. Bill Jekel and Bob Oberbeck and Verne Strang and Clem Hall, especially Clem Hall, all of these people had to do with what I am today, which isn’t much, but at least they got me where I am. I can only say, all these people, God, there was a lot of talent.

Above: Art Rider (on right) with unidentified Scenic Artist on left, drawing at Grosh Studios. (from the Bill Anderson Collection)



John Moffitt remembers Ron Strang and Clark Provins as his principal mentors.

Ron [Strang] is primarily my mentor in Scenic Art. And the other guy I'd credit as my mentor was Clark Provins. I learned perspective from them. And I did have the opportunity to work with some of the Scenic Artists that worked with the really great painters from the heyday of Scenic Art: the '40s, '50s and '60s. They trained a generation of Scenic Artists. And in my opinion they were—and I don't mean to diminish anybody else's work—the last of the truly great Scenic Artists. And the people in my generation who came in, it was a different business. It was a mean, lean, tougher business.

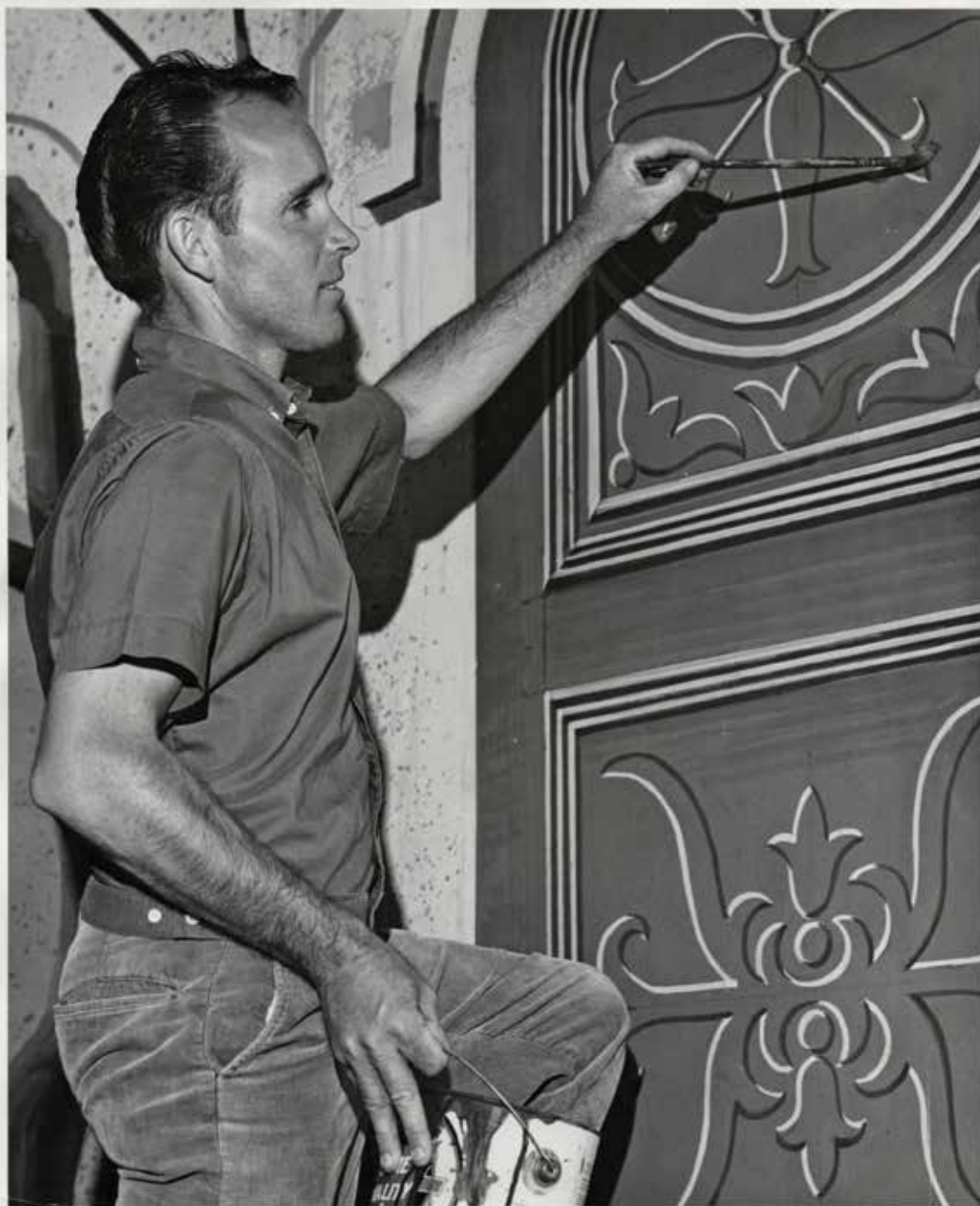
Chris Coakley reflects on Bob Oberbeck, Ben Resella and on his uncle John H. Coakley:

Bob Oberbeck was kind of a layer technician, and liked to get vibration going by kind of going back and forth between complementary grounds. So although he had been brought up in the MGM way, he had developed kind of separately.

The one thing I learned from Benny [Ben Resella], 'Don't shoot me down before I'm flying.' [...] 'There's more than one way to skin a cat.' I think he would deliberately just charge off in a new direction just to see what he could do with it. And of course, he was skilled enough to pull it off every time.

John [H. Coakley]—and most people knew this if they worked around him—was a guy who could just step up to the palette with a Dutch brush and put one color in one side, and one color on the other, kind of mush it together a little bit, walk up to the drop and paint a picture. So he had his own particular style and it became the style of J.C. Backings. And you could tell his work right away from the drops that came out of MGM. They were very exact, and not an extra bit of paint on them. John's [drops] would be more like watercolors: vibrant, and he didn't care about drips; they were part of it. If he had a lot of drips, he turned them into something. His sky would start with ultra-blue at the top. Then he'd throw a little magenta in that, and at the bottom he'd go red. It would look like an L.A. smog-looking [kind of] thing. And in the middle somewhere there would be a little turquoise. And he

Above: Ron Strang, circa 1957-58, painting at Warner Bros. Studio. (from the Strang Family Collection)



Above: Wilbur Ferrell at work. (photograph by Klaus F.J. Bythiner, from the Wilbur Ferrell Collection)

was in favor of exaggerating the separation of tones so that in the spatter you would get the blend, so that your eye, when you looked at it, would sparkle because your eye would do the blending, instead of doing close, manageable jumps in value. MGM was that way—close manageable steps in value. A lot of times they'd have twenty feet of sky and they'd only have two colors. John would have four or five colors in that sky, and it would jump out at you. [...] You could look at some of the earlier MGM drops and see the formal aspect to them. Some of them, you could even see the drawing through the paint. It was just very formal. You could never see that with one of John's paintings—there was nothing to go by. Just whatever came out of his brush was the

backing. Yeah. John's painting was just flamboyant compared to their stuff. So I'm imaging that he pretty much got edged out.

Among the "lucky last" to receive the benefit of the old system apprenticeship training were Joe Francuz, Don MacDonald, Mike Denering and Chris Coakley. Francuz writes,

Well, the master apprentice system is how I started. It's a great system. It's a great way to learn, and it's completely been destroyed. There's no more pot boys as far as I know. No, you can't get anybody to do that kind of work anymore. Everybody's a chief, so everybody does everything.

Scenic Artist Terry Peterson mentions that the last of the best Scenic Artists are now in or near their 60s. He concedes that others could have become great artists; however, the work that would have allowed them to be trained to a high level has simply fallen away, the knowledge has not been passed on. Ed Strang, owner of TRIO and former Scenic Supervisor for Warner Bros. is working to remedy this situation as he continues to train Scenic Artists to produce backings for the motion picture industry.

I look at all these artists, and I still look at their portfolios and I just wish I had work for them, because it's very difficult to make a living as an artist. I'm one of the fortunate

people that have been able to do it. So...it's good. It's fun. And I still enjoy it and I'm still very passionate about it, and all my people have to be passionate about it, or they're not going to work here. Because it is a dying art, but there's still plenty to be done...and we can do it.

J.C. Backings, owners of the largest collection of painted backings in Hollywood, continues to produce new painted backings for motion pictures. These drops are once again becoming recognized as one of the best tools at Production Designers' fingertips, offering unparalleled advantages when shooting in-camera for key shots.



“A trick that Clark Provins taught me: When you paint a moon on a backdrop, if you take a key, like a front-door key, the kind that has a circle in it, and hold it at arm’s length, the moon would fit in that hole. When you are taking a picture of a backing, and you know where a camera’s going to be, you know how big to make the moon.”

In a world where digital images and large-scale inkjet printers are competing for the same market as the traditional hand-painted backdrop, it is by no means certain that the classic Scenic Art of the past will continue as a source of employment for the young artist. However, two things are clearly true: the need for sensitive and technically proficient visual artists will never go away, and demand for these people will grow irrespective of the technical means by which work is produced. In the words of Ed Strang, “Scenic artists, they’re interesting people, they’re really intelligent people for the most part, and they’re very aware of their surroundings. And it’s fun to get inside their mind and figure out what they’re all about, and what motivates them and how to get the best out of the talent that they have.” **ADG**

Above: Don Hanson at Warner Bros. Studio creating a scenic backdrop in the style of Albert Bierstadt’s 1868 painting of Lake Tahoe. (from the Williams Collection)

Karen L. Maness and co-author Richard M. Isackes have secured a publishing contract with Regan Arts LLC, A Phaidon Global Company, for the publication of HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: THE ART OF THE HOLLYWOOD BACKDROP. The book is projected for release in November 2015.

THE UNEXPECTED Virtue of Ignorance

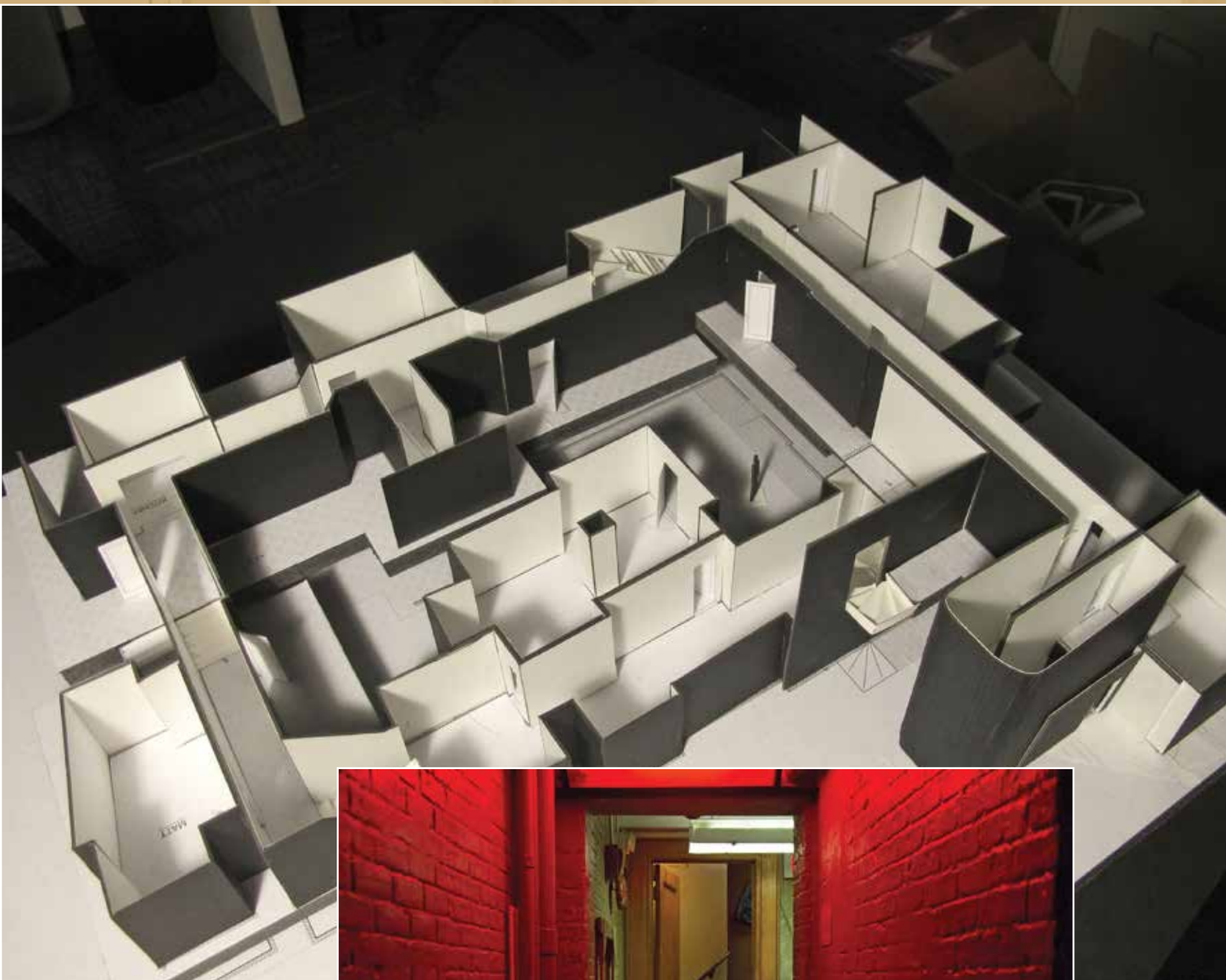
by Kevin Thompson, Production Designer



Photograph by Eric Helmin

Above: The façade and marquee of the St. James Theatre showing the finished Art Department transformation. The art was created by Graphic Designer Eric Helmin. Opposite page: A model of the complete backstage of the theater set, including the labyrinth of corridors, dressing rooms, green room, wardrobe, scenic areas and interconnecting stairways, built under the supervision of Art Director Steve Carter. Inset: Mr. Thompson's photograph of the corridor outside the Green Room. It is on the lower level of a stage set built at Kaufman-Astoria Studios in Queens, NY.

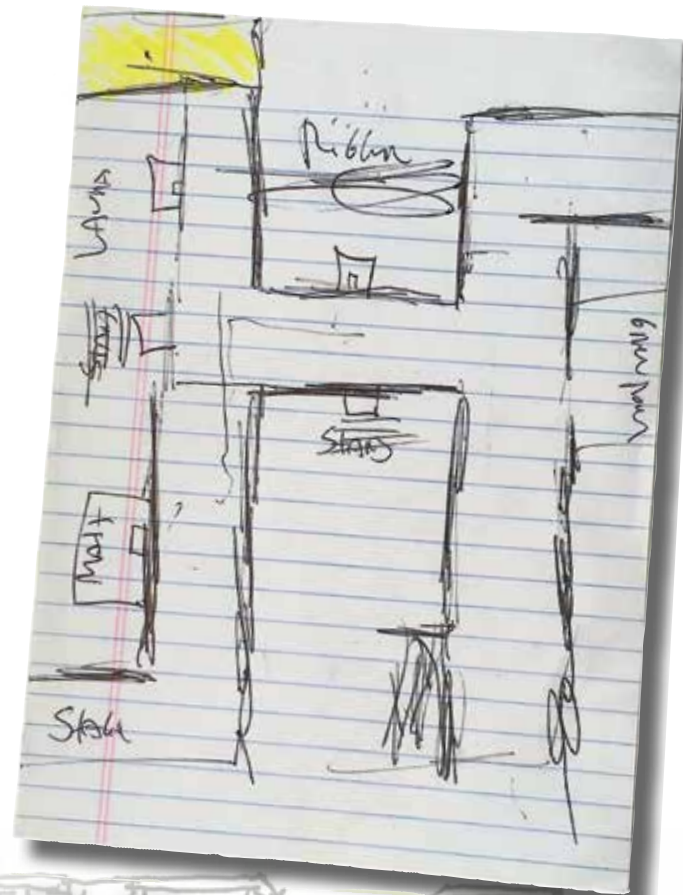
Director Alejandro Iñárritu had something special in mind for *Birdman*. He described the project as a laboratory experiment, and the cast and crew members would participate in the experiment along with him. He wasn't sure what the outcome would be, but we were going to try to do something different...and exciting.



The story takes place primarily in a Broadway theater where Riggan Thomson, an actor best known for portraying a Hollywood superhero, is starring in a serious play that he has adapted and is directing in an attempt to recapture his artistic prestige. The front of the house and the stage of a real Broadway theater would be locations. The dressing rooms, wardrobe spaces, green room, technical spaces and all the interconnecting corridors would be built on a soundstage.

The most challenging aspect of Alejandro's experiment was that he wanted the illusion that the entire film was shot in one single, uninterrupted take. This posed issues that were both technical and creative, that continually informed the design over the next five months, and in every case required a close collaboration with Alejandro and cinematographer Emmanuel (Chivo) Lubezki.

Early rehearsals with the actors took place using a set made of movable elements that represented walls, corridors and dressing room areas. Lengths of corridors connecting the rooms in the bowels of the theater could be lengthened or shortened to accommodate the amount of dialogue in the scene and the speed at which the actors moved from point A to point B. Stairways were designed to accommodate Steadicam and handheld camera movement.



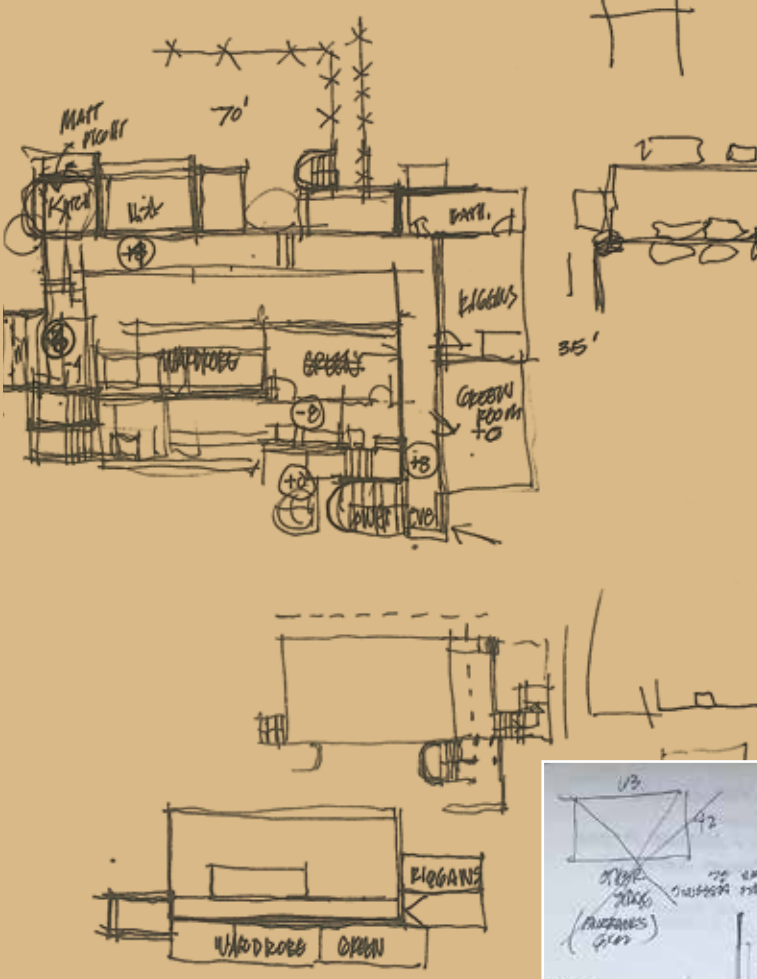
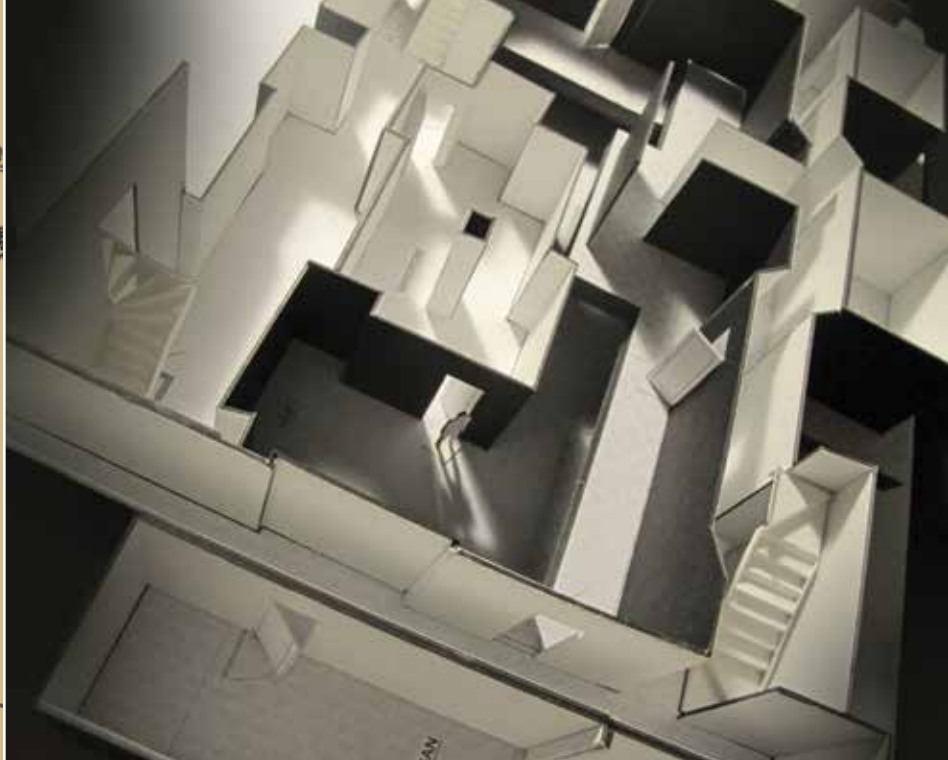
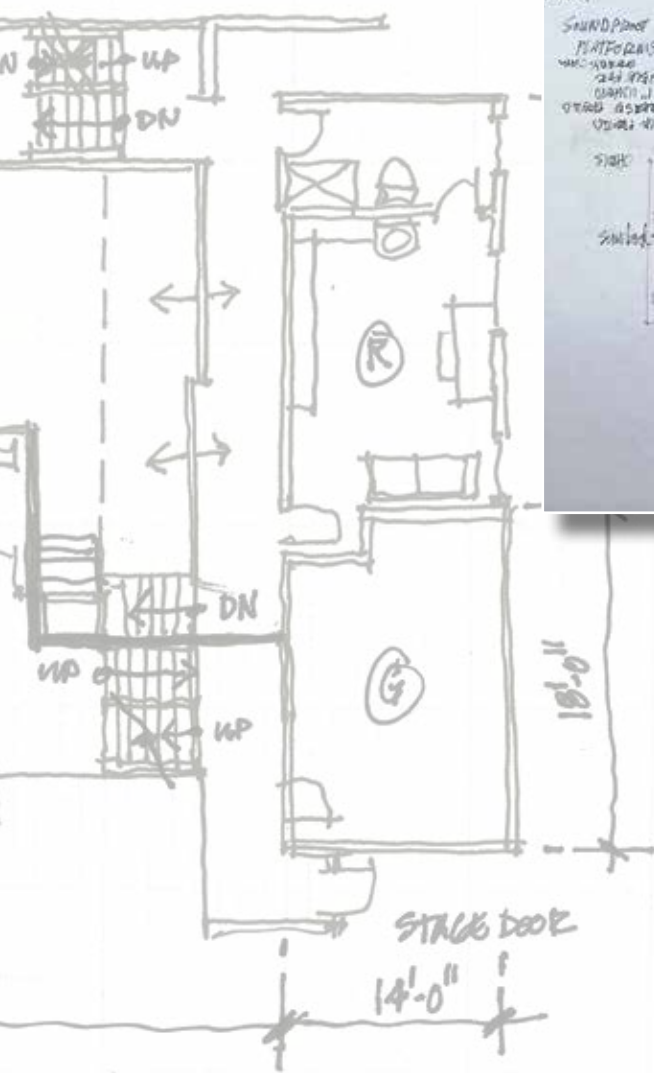
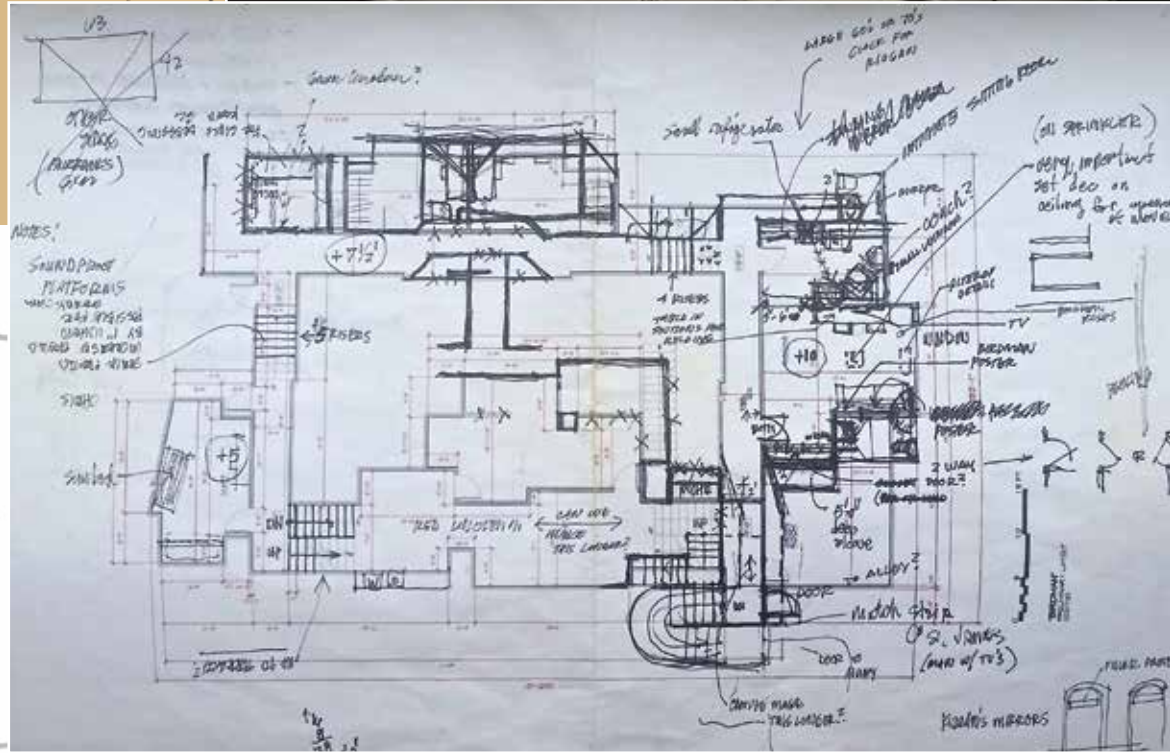
Various development sketches of the complex set: Right: The first backstage-area sketch, drawn by director Alejandro Iñárritu to show Mr. Thompson the idea for a schematic arrangement of spaces in a constructed set. Background: Mr. Thompson's design development sketch of the floor plan for the backstage set. It shows general sizes and scaled spacial relationships of rooms. Opposite page, top left: An early schematic sketch of the entire backstage area, showing a plan and section of the set. Center: Another drawing by Mr. Thompson of the set, along with notes from rehearsals to indicate further development. It includes both levels of the set. Upper right: A detail of the Art Department model of the backstage set, showing the multiple levels of the wardrobe shop, the scenic shop corridor and Riggan's dressing room hallway. Bottom, right: A set still of the scenic shop corridor, on the lower level of the constructed set at Kaufman-Astoria Studios.

"I felt it was essential to create backgrounds rich in character using clashes of texture and color. Alejandro wanted to feel emotionally connected to the sets, so I listened closely to everything he said about how he wanted this backstage world to feel."

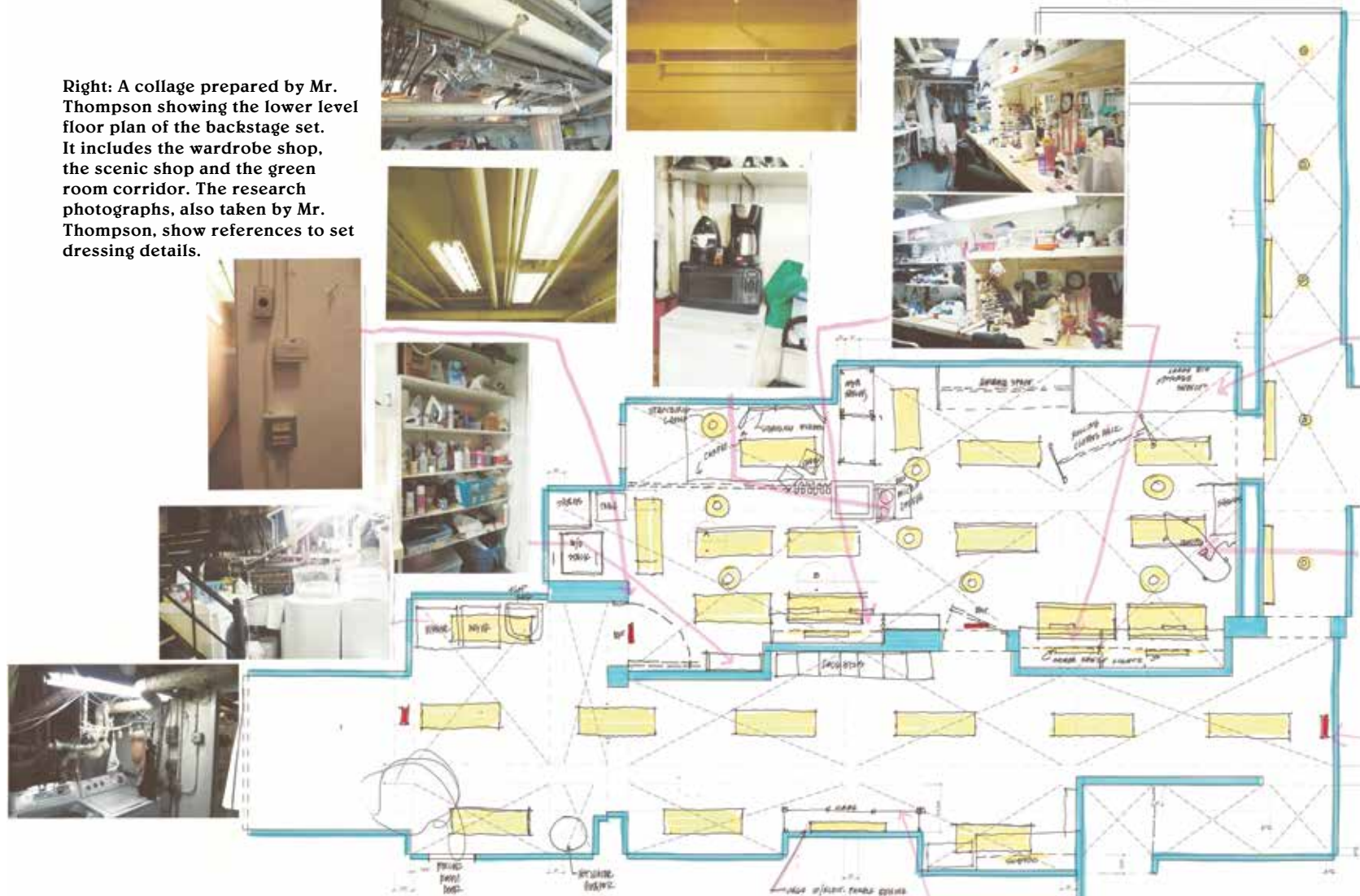
The constructed sets needed to connect seamlessly with the real locations and the transitions between the two were critical. In the end, the built set was a maze of rooms, spaces and corridors, sometimes going up and down steps, all of which ultimately connected in a continuous loop. Shortcuts through spaces and multiple connecting corridors provided the flexibility to choose, on the day of shooting, the right length path required for a particular scene.

Birdman also required a design for the Broadway play within the movie. I designed three sets for the play, an adaptation of the Raymond Carver story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. Each of the sets was seen both in progress and then as a finished and lighted set, so they needed to be





Right: A collage prepared by Mr. Thompson showing the lower level floor plan of the backstage set. It includes the wardrobe shop, the scenic shop and the green room corridor. The research photographs, also taken by Mr. Thompson, show references to set dressing details.



built to show that progression. The period of the play (the 1950s) was settled on in part to allow for more design contrast with the current-day sets and costumes of the movie itself.

“In the end, the built set was a maze of rooms, spaces and corridors, sometimes going up and down steps, all of which ultimately connected in a continuous loop.”

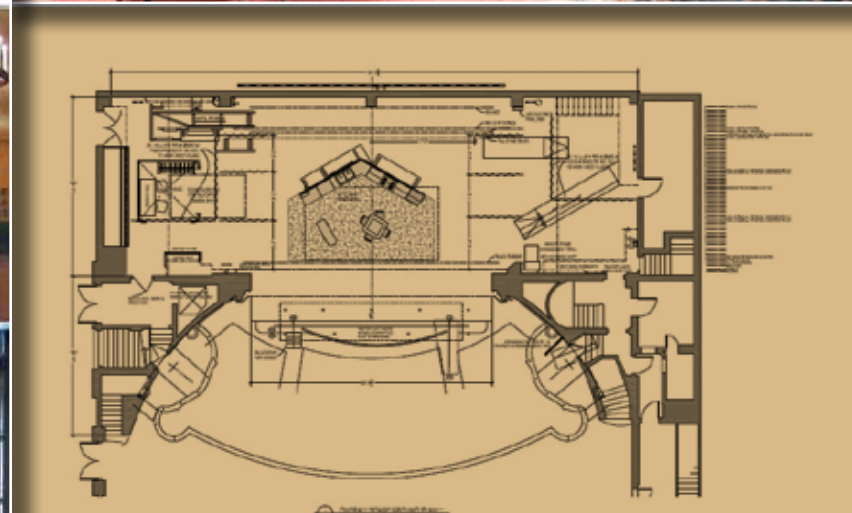
Opposite page, top left: This is a detail of an inspiration board by Mr. Thompson, showing color references, texture and mood. Right: A set photograph of Riggan’s dressing room on the upper level of the Kaufman-Astoria set. Center and bottom: Two construction drawings of the kitchen set for the Broadway production to be placed on the stage at the St. James Theatre location. The combination plan, elevations and rendering of the set was drawn by Assistant Art Director David Meyer.

The natural, authentic look of a Broadway theater was designed to contrast with the polished Hollywood-superhero glamour of the world that Riggan was used to, so the theater locations and sets were dirty, cramped, claustrophobic and un-renovated. I felt it was essential to create backgrounds rich in character using clashes of texture and color. The sets were made even more dynamic by using practical lighting to create highlight and shadow, and different color temperatures were employed to create contrast and tension.

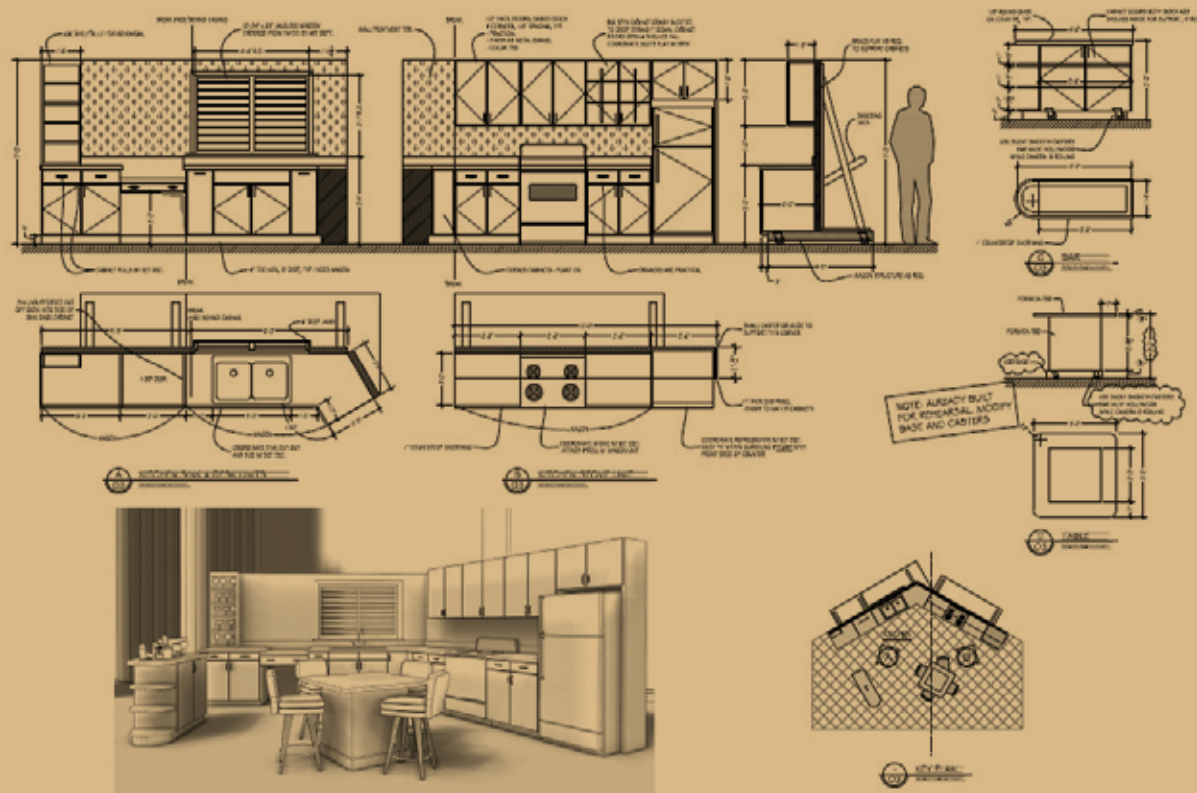
Alejandro wanted to feel emotionally connected to the sets, so I listened closely to everything he said about how he wanted this backstage world to feel.

In the heart of the New York’s Theater District, the historic St. James Theatre on West 44th Street was chosen as the main location. The scale, the size of the house, and the details were all completely authentic and would inform the ancillary spaces that were to be built as extensions of it. The wing spaces on the St. James Theatre’s stage created the connecting points through which the actors could enter the rabbit warren stage set at Kaufman-Astoria.

My greatest pleasure designing comes from collaborating with different directors who each have their own vision for the film they’re making. I prefer to interpret those visions, and add to them, rather than impose any style of my own. I have been lucky to work with several auteur directors who have a complete vision, and are brave enough to take chances and try things that each make me look at the filmmaking process in an entirely new way. Alejandro did that on this movie, and the process was exhilarating and fulfilling on every level—intellectually, visually and technically. **ADG**



Set photographs by Kevin Thompson



Kevin Thompson,
Production
Designer
Steve Carter,
Art Director
Chris Shriver,
David Meyer,
Assistant
Art Directors
Eric Helmin,
Graphic
Designer
Jane Wu,
Set Designer
Alex Gorodetsky,
Charge Scenic
Artist
George DeTitta Jr.,
Set Decorator

production design



PRODUCTION DESIGN CREDIT WAIVERS

by Laura Kamogawa, Credits Administrator

The following requests to use the Production Design screen credit were granted at its July and August meetings by the ADG Council upon the recommendation of the Production Design Credit Waiver Committee.

THEATRICAL:

Jon Billington – THE INTERVIEW – Columbia
Donald Graham Burt – GONE GIRL –
20th Century Fox
Katie Byron – THE FINAL GIRLS –
Groundswell Productions
Stefania Cella – BLACK MASS – Warner Bros.
Chris Cornwell – THE WEDDING RINGER –
Screen Gems
Clay Griffith – UNTITLED CAMERON CROWE
PROJECT – Columbia Pictures
Troy Hansen – THE MARINE 4: MOVING TARGET –
WWE Studios
Marcia Hinds – ANNIE – Columbia
Jon Hutman – UNBROKEN – NBC Universal
Steve Jordan – RECOVERY ROAD – Revere Studios
Philip Messina – THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKING
JAY PART 1 and PART 2 – Lionsgate
Beth Mickle – LOST RIVER – Warner Bros.
Andrew Neskoromny – BARELY LETHAL – RKO Pictures
Jeannine Opewall – LAST DAYS IN THE DESERT –
Mockingbird Pictures and UNTITLED WARREN
BEATTY PROJECT – New Regency

Aaron Osborne – YOU'RE NOT YOU – DiNovi Pictures
Barry Robison – OUIJA – NBC Universal
Meghan Rogers – RECLAIM – Lionsgate
Jefferson Sage – SPY – 20th Century Fox
Chris Seagers – THE FANTASTIC FOUR –
20th Century Fox

TELEVISION:

Jeremy Cassells – SLEEPY HOLLOW – 20th Century Fox
Jerry Dunn – SULLIVAN & SON – Warner Bros.
Ryan Fought – YOU GOT THIS –
Final Stretch Productions
Joaquin Grey – THE WHISPERS – ABC Studios
Donna Hattin – COMMANDO CRASH – Disney XD
Mark Hutman – THE RED BAND SOCIETY –
ABC Studios
Corey Kaplan – STITCHERS – ABC Family
Charlie Lagola – SONS OF ANARCHY – FX Network
Alicia Maccarone – THE LAST SHIP – TNT
Harry Matheu – HENRY DANGER – Nickelodeon
Rachel O'Toole – RUSH – USA Network
Patrick Parkhurst – UNTITLED SKETCH COMEDY –
NBC Universal
Peter Politanoff – HOW TO GET AWAY
WITH MURDER – ABC Studios
Matthew Russell – YOUNG & HUNGRY – ABC Family
Maxine Shepard – BLACK-ISH – ABC Studios
Kathleen Widomski – THE MINDY PROJECT –
NBC Universal

DUAL CREDIT:

The Art Directors Council voted to grant dual Production Design credit to James J. Murakami and Charisse Cardenas for AMERICAN SNIPER – Warner Bros.



coming soon

ANNIE

Marcia Hinds, Production Designer

Patricia Woodbridge, Art Director

Katherine Akiko Day, Martin Fahrner,

W. Steven Graham, Diem Hoang, Bo Johnson,
Assistant Art Directors

Eric Helmin, Ginger Ingram LaBella, Timothy Peel,
Graphic Artists

Wes Louie, Concept Illustrator

Aaron Sowd, Storyboard Artist

Diane Rich, Scenic Artist

David Schlesinger, Set Decorator

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membership



WELCOME TO THE GUILD

by Emmanuel Espinoza, Membership Department

During the months of July and August, the following 22 new members were approved by the Councils for membership in the Guild:

Art Directors:

Callie Andreadis – EXFIL –
Pacific Films Productions, LLC
Gustaf Aspegren – EXFIL –
Pacific Films Productions, LLC
Tyler Jensen – TOOKEN – Elevative Entertainment, LLC
Ryan Warren Smith – MAX ROSE – Lightstream Pictures
Matthew Steinbrenner – 2014 BET AWARDS – BET
Mikael Varhelyi – Various commercials
Bennet Zelle – CHELSEA LATELY – E! Entertainment

Assistant Art Directors:

Ryan Grossheim – Production Apprentice Program
Jourdan Henderson – BRILLIANCE – Legendary Pictures
Justin Lang – BATMAN V SUPERMAN:
DAWN OF JUSTICE – Warner Bros.
James Powell – CHELSEA LATELY – E! Entertainment
Erin Riegel – Production Apprentice Program
Jeanine Ringer – Production Apprentice Program

Graphic Designer:

Gabriella Schnierle – BIG BROTHER – CBS

Graphic Artists:

Brian Kim – Fox Sports
Seungmin Roh – NBC Magic Room
Federico Saccone – Fox Sports

Senior Illustrators:

Richard Poulain – Various commercials
James Randolph – Various commercials

Illustrators:

Frank Dellafemina – Various commercials
Shae Shatz – THE JUNGLE BOOK – Disney

Junior Set Designer:

Andrea Onorato – MAX STEEL – Open Road Films

At the end of August, the Guild had 2224 members.

coming soon

HORRIBLE BOSSES 2

Clayton Hartley,
Production Designer
Christa Munro,
Art Director
Harry E. Otto, Assistant
Art Director
Harrison Hartley,
Graphic Designer
Lorrie Campbell,
Set Designer
Jan Pascale,
Set Decorator
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milestones



FRANK RICHWOOD **1929 – 2014**

by his children, Blair and Patrick Richwood and Laura Richwood-Scarafone

Frank Richwood passed peacefully at the age of 85, on his own terms: in his Oceanside home with his three children. He lived a private life with an open heart; he championed strays and the little guy; he pointed out how to see instead of just look. He didn't waste time fighting with his leukemia diagnosis; he went out and spent his time where it mattered—with his friends and family. He even planted the tree where his ashes were finally scattered at the Washington mountain farm he loved so much, Trillium Woods.

Born and raised in San Francisco, Frank Richwood grew interested in art at an early age and was primarily self-taught. After four years in the Navy during the Korean War, he married Hollywood native Ann Patricia Leslie (aka Pat Richwood), and moved to Burbank to raise a family and work in the film and television industry. For fifteen years, he worked as a Scenic Artist with what he felt were some of the most gifted artists in the country. While still painting and selling his still-life oils, and sculpting literary figures from the works of Dickens and Melville, he made the transition to Art Director, first in television (*The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Rockford Files*, *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*) and then in feature films. For the next fifteen years, he worked as an Art Director with some of the industry's finest Production Designers on a series of memorable projects: *Predator*, *Dragnet*, *Jumpin' Jack Flash*,

Rhinestone, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. He worked with Robert Boyle on six films, and in 1989, he was honored as an Oscar nominee in Art Direction with Production Designer Albert Brenner on *Beaches*.

While working at every major studio, Frank's large-scale paintings of behind-the-scenes shoots were born from a love of a vanishing craft, a respect for the creative technology, and a desire to document the fading history of his great industry. Rarely portrayed in paintings is the working crew and the wonderful equipment they use that the movie-goer never sees. It was just such a scene from the Columbia Studios Ranch, titled *Back Lot Light*, that won first place in a 1993 Toluca Lake Art Festival. In 1996–1997, six pieces of this photo-realistic style backlot series were exhibited at the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, with sales made through the museum's gallery.

Retiring to Oceanside in 1998 allowed Frank more time to experiment with paint, in plein-air and in his studio. Joining fellow artists in plein-air classes, he furthered his autodidactic education on many California paint-outs with friends and colleagues. He enjoyed exhibiting at the Del Mar County Fair for two years, and showing at the California Art Club's 4th biannual *Created in the Studio* show at the Women's City Club of Pasadena (2003–2004). But Frank was especially honored by the San Diego Maritime Museum when his entry to the Festival of Sail 2002, *Star of India's Colors*, was chosen for their event poster and program cover.

As generous as he was humble, Frank handed out his paintings and sculptures as freely as his advice and compliments to friends and family. Some of these wonderful people shared stories and photos in a book created for Frank's 80th birthday, *Perfectly Frank*.

From location crew colleagues and tennis buddies to loving relatives and admiring artists, Frank was a top member of many My Favorite People Clubs. His professional memberships included the US Navy, the former Scenic Artists Local 816, the Art Directors Guild, the California Art Club, the Plein Air Painters Association of San Diego, the Laguna Plein Air Painters Association the Southern California Plein Air Painters Association, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Survived by his older brother Bob, younger sister Win, children Blair, Laura and Patrick, and grandchild Madeline, Frank Richwood will be missed by scores more. If you're one of those, you probably won't be surprised that Frank wanted no services, fuss or tears—only good memories with lots of laughs. We celebrate his huge heart, enormous talents and immeasurable contributions to the family, the friends and the entertainment industry he loved so much.



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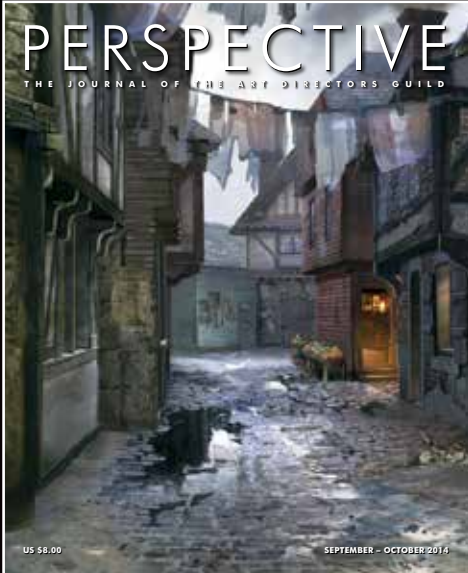
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milestones



THOMAS BURNS DUFF, JR. 1925 – 2013

by his children, Emily and Brian Duff and Nanette Duff Sullivan

Thomas "Tom" Duff Jr., who served as the Business Representative for the former Scenic, Title & Graphic Artists IATSE Local 816 in the early 1970s, passed away October 3, 2013, at the age of 88. A native of Los Angeles, Tom began working in the Scenic Art department at MGM following his graduation from Venice High School in 1944. He took time off to serve in WWII, then returned to the studio where he became a Master Scenic Artist. He worked at MGM until 1968 and his work appeared in over 600 films including *An American in Paris*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Gigi*, *Ben-Hur*, *Brigadoon*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *North by Northwest*, *Doctor Zhivago* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. He was the artist who painted the well-known hallway backing seen

in the Donald O'Connor musical number, "Make 'Em Laugh" from *Singin' in the Rain*. He earned his bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from UCLA while working at MGM. After leaving MGM, Tom served as Scenic Supervisor at NBC Studios in Burbank until his election to Business Representative of Local 816. After a successful term with the union, he resumed his role as Scenic Supervisor at NBC until his retirement in 1997.

Above: Tom Duff's receding corridor backing from *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN* is still available for rental from JC Backings.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Emily Duff, their two children Brian Duff and Nanette Duff Sullivan and her two children, Evan Sullivan and Danielle Sullivan. Tom and his family were seasonal residents of Keauhou on Hawaii's Big Island for more than forty years, where he loved painting seascapes. Once an artist, always an artist.

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Much of the work done by the designers and artists in silent films has been lost to history. Screen credits were very limited; drawings and sketches were normally thrown away as soon as a film was completed; and many times the film itself was destroyed after its first limited theatrical run. Such is the case with *NAN OF MUSIC MOUNTAIN*, a 1917 five-reel Western based on Frank H. Spearman's best-selling novel published the year before, that starred handsome silent screen idol Wallace Reid and leading lady Ann Little, a well-known equestrienne and daredevil actress.

The photograph on stage above, probably at the Famous Players-Laskey lot (now Paramount Pictures) on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood, shows the crew at work on the film's climactic blizzard scene. Steel scaffolding was available at that time, but more often, risers were built of lumber. It was a less expensive material, and the labor to construct these units was the least expensive element of all. The snow, both heaped into drifts and blowing in the winds created by a gasoline fan, was loose asbestos—at least as toxic as the cigarettes the crew members are smoking. The primary scenic element was a gorgeous painted backing—misty, subtle and impressionistic. The name of its artist, too, is lost.

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