

Building Worlds of Reality and Fancy

Variety again gives voice to members of the **Art Directors Guild** who on these pages assess the work of production designers nominated for ADG's 19th annual **Excellence in Production Design Awards**. The guild nominated individuals in 11 categories, and a team of *Variety* editors picked one nominee from

each category. ADG then assigned one of its members to write an appreciation of that designer's work. As always, production designers in 2014 created a plethora of environments — real and imagined, comfortable and menacing, alluring and repelling — that provided the visual and architectural underpinning for the year's films, TV shows and digital projects. From the historical

whimsy of "The Grand Budapest Hotel" to the dark, moody tones of "Foxcatcher," and from the stylishness of "House of Lies" to the freakishness of "American Horror Story," the 11 artists profiled here and their fellow nominees represent some of the best work seen in 2014. Along with their collaborators, they will continue to inspire designers in the future. — *Peter Caranicas*

Tipsheet

WHAT:
ADG Excellence in Production Design Awards
WHEN:
5 p.m. Jan. 31
WHERE:
Beverly Hilton
WEB:
adg.org



THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL (Fox Searchlight)

Period film

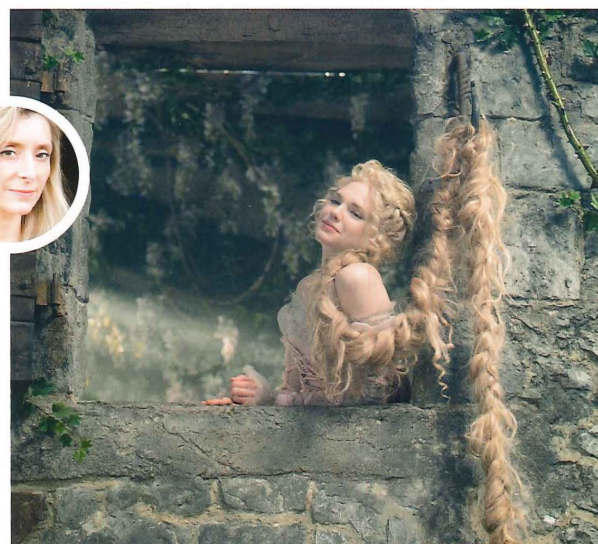
Production Designer: Adam Stockhausen

By Tom Walsh

Seldom is it that a film released nine months prior to awards voting remains in consideration. Such is the esteem for "The Grand Budapest Hotel" and its creative design team — production designer Adam Stockhausen, set decorator Anna Pinnoch, and costume designer Milena Canonero — that this film endures and is so universally well regarded. For Stefan Zweig's world as imagined by director-screenwriter Wes Anderson, and captured by cinematographer Robert D.

Yeoman, the story's many settings become essential characters in telling a tale about a lost time and place. An assortment of constructed sets, locations, miniatures, backdrops, graphics, props, animation and computer imagery are all baked into one grand seamless confection of visual delights and memories. It is to the credit of Anderson that he created a safe space where Stockhausen and his colleagues could realize their aspirations.

Walsh's credits include "Longmire" and "Desperate Housewives."



INTO THE WOODS (Walt Disney Studios)

Fantasy film

Production Designer: Dennis Gassner

By Oana Bogdan

Dennis Gassner creates a magical world using earthy neutral tones that complement the colorful characters, interwoven stories and dazzling costumes for "Into the Woods." Transformed into a film, the musical unfolds with an ethereal timeless look that makes you feel as if you've just stepped into a classic but modernized Grimm's fairytale book. My three favorite sets were Rapunzel's tower with stone walls and white furniture to depict her innocence; the interior of the wolf's belly, with

walls made of fabric that let Granny and Little Red Riding Hood be swallowed up whole (yikes!); and inside the baker's shop with its intricate details, fresh loaves and sweets (mmmm!). The magical woods were largely built on stages in England. The outdoor waterfall was gorgeously fashioned into an existing lake to create a naturally beautiful backdrop for the princely duet. Outstandingly designed settings complement outstanding storytelling!

Bogdan's credits include "Justified" and "Hawaii Five-O."



ALSO NOMINATED

"Inherent Vice"
David Crank
"The Imitation Game"
Maria Djurkovic
"The Theory of Everything"
John Paul Kelly
"Unbroken"
Jon Hutman



ALSO NOMINATED

"Captain America: The Winter Soldier"
Peter Wenham
"Dawn of the Planet of the Apes"
James Chinlund
"Guardians of the Galaxy"
Charles Wood
"Interstellar"
Nathan Crowley

**FOXCATCHER** (Sony Pictures Classics)

Contemporary film

Production Designer: Jess Gonchor

By Raf Lydon

Foxcatcher" director Bennett Miller's gripping film based on the true story of the murder of Olympic wrestler David Schultz by millionaire John du Pont is visually brought to life by the amazing work of production designer Jess Gonchor and his team. Gonchor and Miller previously collaborated on "Moneyball" and "Capote." The designer's monochromatic palette visually adds to the storytelling, painting the odd world of du Pont's Foxcatcher farm. The sets and their decoration capture the late 1980s and an even older world

of the du Pont family, a place time has forgotten, an old American spirit of heroes that has passed over John du Pont, whose trophy room, decorated by his aging mother, is bathed in cold light. Walls of trophies and medals bear down on him, yet this is his sanctuary, his lair, visually adding to the character. Gonchor's cold realism design style is purposely broken only at the wrestling training center where he adds warmth and vibrant colors — creating the only place Schultz felt alive and had a sense of hope.

Lydon's credits include "Full Metal Jousting" and "Baby Daddy."

← **ALSO NOMINATED**
"American Sniper"

James J. Murakami,

Charisse Cardenas

"Birdman"

Kevin Thompson

"Gone Girl"

Donald Graham Burt

"Nightcrawler"

Kevin Kavanaugh

→ **ALSO NOMINATED**
"Boardwalk Empire"

Episode: "Golden Days for Boys and Girls"
 Bill Groom

"Game of Thrones"

Episodes: "The Laws of Gods and Men,"

"The Mountain and the Viper"

Deborah Riley

"The Knick"

Episodes: "Method and Madness,"

"Working Late a Lot"

Howard Cummings

"Mad Men"

Episode: "Time Zones"

Dan Bishop

**GOTHAM** (Fox)

Episodes: Pilot, "Selina Kyle," "Arkham"

One-hour period or fantasy single camera TV series

Production Designer: Doug Kraner

By John Iacovelli

Production designer Doug Kraner has given "Gotham" a new and original look. The production design is richly textured with dramatic interiors that have soaring arches and high ceilings. This is the Gotham of our dark imaginations with art-deco inspired details and a darkly moody film noir aesthetic. This Gotham shimmers with monochromatic spires that glisten with the spit and polish of an urban labyrinth. Art directors Laura Ballinger Gardner and Charley Beal have created stunning sets

with period-feeling graphics by Laurel Kolsby and soaring matte paintings of our dreams and nightmares by illustrator Eric Fehlberg. Kraner delivers a stunning look that truly feels like a graphic novel come to life. From the clock-face window penthouse to the Tudor-inspired library of Wayne Manor, this is the Gotham we always wanted. From the speakeasy that is Fish Moody's to the decrepit Arkham Asylum, this landmark design work deserves top honors.

Iacovelli's credits include "Los Americans" and "Lincoln Heights."

**HOUSE OF CARDS** (Netflix)

Episode: Chapter 18

One-hour contemporary single-camera TV series

Production Designer: Steve Arnold

By Steve Bass

Scenery is an illusion — an elaborate construct of lies tacked together to make you believe that what you are witnessing is real, a fragile construct that can come tumbling down if even the smallest of cracks lets the light of reality shine in. And so, it is with meticulous precision that Steve Arnold and his team have elevated themselves to the level of masters of lies, surpassing even the duplicitous lead character Francis Underwood, played by Kevin Spacey, in Netflix's "House of Cards." In a world so authentically crafted

and detailed to precision, with exacting re-creations of door pediments and hand-carved newel posts from solid blocks of wood, Arnold's vision meets and transcends reality. Bathed in a million shades of cream, the environments built under his wizardry seduce me into forgetting that his world is not real — even though as a working professional I can see through the cracks. Sometimes the lies of masters can be better than the truth.

Bass' credits include "Teen Choice Awards 2014" and "The Oscars Red Carpet Live."

→ **ALSO NOMINATED**
"Homeland"

Episode: "The Drone Queen"

John D. Kretschmer

"Justified"

Episodes: "Murder of Crowes,"

"Wrong Roads,"

"The Toll"

Dave Blass

"The Newsroom"

Episodes: "Boston,"

"Main Justice,"

"Contempt"

Karen Steward

"True Detective"

Episodes: "The Locked Room," "Form and Void"

Alex DiGerlando

**ALSO NOMINATED****"Cosmos: A SpaceTime Odyssey"**Episode: "Unafraid of the Dark"
Seth Reed**"Fargo"**Episode: "The Crocodiles Dilemma"
John Blackie**"Houdini"**Episodes: Part I, Part II
Patrizia Von Brandenstein**"Sherlock"**Episode: "His Last Vow"
Arwel W. Jones**AMERICAN HORROR STORY: FREAK SHOW** (FX)

Episode: "Massacres and Matinees"

TV movie or miniseries

Production Designer: Mark Worthington

By Matt Tognacci

For his fourth "American Horror Story" go-round, production designer Mark Worthington and his talented team let their freak flag fly with production values that rival those found on the bigscreen. In "American Horror Story: Freak Show" we find ourselves in 1952 Jupiter, Fla., among the muted tones and faded glamor of Elsa's Cabinet of Curiosities. In this majestic traveling carnival, Worthington not only designed an entire exterior compound, he built every interior to match. Bearded ladies, strongmen and pinheads all have their own

unique spaces adorned with the highest level of period detail and distress. The appalling splendor continues with classic big-top tents, gnarly school bus torture chambers, turn-of-the-century circus wagons and the oddest playroom of one of the scariest characters on TV. Thanks to Worthington's attention to detail, these spaces become as crucial to the story as the actors themselves. I've been a huge fan of Mark's since "Ugly Betty" and can't wait to see what he comes up with next.

Tognacci's credits include "The Talk" and "Minute to Win It."

**CALIFORNICATION** (Showtime)

Episodes: "Faith, Hope, Love"; "Like Father Like Son"; kickoff

HOUSE OF LIES (Showtime)

Episodes: "Wreckage," "Middlegame," "Zha-Moreng"

Half-hour single-camera TV series

Production Designer: Ray Yamagata

By Dave Blass

In the fast-paced world of half-hour single-camera shows, no designer is setting trends faster than Ray Yamagata. Showtime showcases his styles with two comedic series. With "House of Lies," the design flows along with the ever-present 360-degree Steadicam shots. Yamagata seamlessly blends the strong concrete lines of the new Kaan & Associates office with a trip to a colorful bazaar in China and the vibrant tones of a high-end product showcase party. Each environment is

completely immersive in its texture and decor. The camera moves effortlessly through the scenery, which has a fresh, defined feeling while not limiting the flow of the actors. "Californication" takes a more static approach in creating its vision of Los Angeles. Yamagata sets the tone here with more defined spaces framed with stark lines, pale walls and just the right splash of primary color against the dark silhouette of star David Duchovny.

Blass' credits include "Constantine" and "Justified."

**ALSO NOMINATED****"Modern Family"**Episodes: "Halloween 3: Awesomeland," "Marco Polo," "Won't You Be Our Neighbor"
Claire Bennett**"Silicon Valley";**Episodes: "Articles of Incorporation," "Signaling Risk," "Optimal Tip-to-Tip Efficiency"
Richard Toyon**"Veep"**Episodes: "Clovis," "Special Relationship," "Debate"
James Gloster**ALSO NOMINATED****"How I Met Your Mother"**Episode: "How Your Mother Met Me"
Stephan Olson**"The Millers"**Episodes: "You Are the Wind Beneath My Wings, Man," "Controversy," "Papa Was a Rolling Bone"
Glenda Rovello**"Undatable"**Episode: pilot
Cabot McMullen**THE BIG BANG THEORY** (CBS)

Episodes: "The Locomotive Manipulation," "The Convention Conundrum," "The Status Quo Combustion"

MIKE & MOLLY (CBS)

Episodes: "Mike & Molly's Excellent Adventure," "The Dice Lady Cometh"

Multicamera TV series

Production Designer: John Shaffner

By Scott Moses

It's difficult to sum up someone's career in a paragraph, especially when the magnitude of their work is as vast as John Shaffner's. Everyone in our field is inspired by his continuing legacy. His creation of iconic comedy sets uses color, texture and style to embody the character's history in playful and dynamic ways. The actors feel more connected to their on-screen life because his sets allow us to be pulled into their world. His ever-growing list of awards

and nominations, including this year's two Art Directors Guild Award noms, are just icing on the cake. In "The Big Bang Theory: The Locomotive Manipulation," the train is understated and heightens the excitement of a long-awaited kiss. With "Mike & Molly: Mike & Molly's Excellent Adventure," we travel through John's world as he shows us the details hiding around each corner of the multitude of sets.

Moses' credits include "Kitchen Nightmares" and "Worst Case Scenario."



PETER PAN LIVE! (NBC)

86TH ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS (ABC)

Awards or event special — television
Production Designer: Derek McLane

By James Pearse Connelly

We can get comfortable with forgiving luxuries — “Post will fix that”; “Wash it out with blue light” — but not on live TV, which happens in real time. Conceptually, one must design a total environment that allows for progressive action as well as control the choreography to traffic the needs of the story. This year, production designer Derek McLane mastered two applications of live TV: the Oscar telecast and NBC’s “Peter Pan Live!” How can you forget Ellen’s

black tie ceremony so elegantly designed under the Dolby proscenium? Derek’s design weaves numerous gorgeously layered looks to keep the prestigious broadcast moving. In “Peter Pan,” Derek creates an immersive, fairy tale world as well as a flawless production-friendly environment with which the actors, cameras and crew can comfortably execute their craft and move from one world to another — live!

Connelly’s credits include “Extreme Weight Loss” and “The Voice.”

←
ALSO NOMINATED
“Super Bowl XLVIII
Halftime Show:
Starring Bruno Mars”
Bruce Rodgers
“The American Music
Awards 2014”
Joe Stewart

“The Night That
Changed America:
A Grammy Salute
to the Beatles”
Matthew Russell
“The 66th Primetime
Emmy Awards”
Keith Ian Raywood

→
ALSO NOMINATED
Apple “Perspective”
Sean Hargreaves
Ikea “Carousel”
Richard Lassalle
Katy Perry “Dark Horse”
Jeremy Reed
Simpsons Marathon
Zach Mathews



COLDPLAY: “MAGIC” (Parlophone)

Short format: webseries, musicvideo or commercial
Production Designer: Emma Fairley

By Adam Rowe

If you could summon the spirit that the movie “The Artist” gave us alongside the wonders of “Houdini,” you’d have the world that is alive in Coldplay’s “Magic” musicvideo. Knowing what I know about the design experience, Emma Fairley probably wasn’t given much of a starting point: a few meetings, a slew of mismatched images and an interesting concept. Also assume it was put together with a budget that didn’t include the countless opinions from image consultants, record labels,

artists, managers, producers and the forcefully guiding hand of time. Regardless of the challenges, the audience sees something wonderful — a dignified and beautiful statement. This piece has a fluid time frame; a thoughtful emotional surrounding that is held together by objects of nostalgia, draped fabric and old curiosities of magic. We never leave this world, and we wouldn’t want to. That’s what makes this design exceptional.

Rowe’s credits include “Parks and Recreation” and “Criminal Minds.”



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ALSO NOMINATED
“Key & Peele”
Episodes: “Halloween
Episode,” “Alien
Imposters”
Gary Kordan
“Portlandia”
Episode: “Celery”
Tyler B. Robinson
“The Tonight Show
Starring Jimmy Fallon”
Episodes 1, 45, 56
Eugene Lee, Peter Baran
“The Voice”
Episode: “Blind
Auditions Premiere”
James Pearse Connelly,
Anton Goss



“SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE” (NBC)

Episodes: Louis C.K. with Sam Smith, Anna Kendrick
with Pharrell Williams, Chris Rock with Prince

Variety, competition, reality or gameshow series

Production Designers: Keith Ian Raywood, Eugene Lee,
Akira Yoshimura, N. Joseph DeTullio

By Judy Cosgrove

“Saturday Night Live” production designers show us that the funniest jokes are the closest to the truth. Whether spoofing the White House, a game show, news desk, office or clinic, they get the laugh without resorting to visual clichés. Add current musical guests such as Prince, Sam Smith and Pharrell Williams, each requiring his own evocative settings, and it’s proof that if comedy is about timing, there is none to spare for these designers who consistently hit their marks on a weekly basis.

New York City provides endless inspiration for the look of the show, as originally conceived by production designer Eugene Lee, who has designed “SNL” since its premiere in 1975. Lee now shares credit and the workload with “SNL” veteran designers Akira Yoshimura, Keith Ian Raywood, and N. Joseph DeTullio. This marks the three-time-winners’ seventh nomination in this television category.

Cosgrove’s credits include “Cougar Town,” “King of Queens” and “The Prince of Tides.”