

“TAUN TAUN”



IPHONE PRO

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The title “Taun Taun” is a reference to Hoth and the iconic frozen world of the Star Wars classic The Empire Strikes Back.

I was tasked with helping to create a similar world for this project where a group of filmmakers would be using the newest Apple Pro device to shoot a sci-fi film epic of their own, in some of the most challenging conditions imaginable.

Director **Diego Contreras** invited me to join him on this adventure to tell the story of both the on screen filmmakers and the film they were creating itself.

Our initial challenge was to find locations that not only had snow in August but were extreme. With the challenges posed by a warming planet and global covid restrictions this led us on a global search for the perfect place to create our world. Scouting and deciding on a location was grueling but we landed on Iceland as a place for our exteriors. A place I’ve always wanted to see

Our initial production approach would be to shoot 3 days of exteriors on one of the glaciers in Iceland and then return to the US for another two days on the Volume Stage in Los Angeles. What an adventure it was.

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After extensive scouting we agreed the Langjokull Glacier offered us a variety of beautiful but otherworldly frozen landscapes and was only a 3 hour drive from where we were based in Reykjavik with service company **Pegasus productions**.

I began design and fabrication of several key elements for the Iceland portion of the project. The crash site / snow vehicles /in addition to the logistical challenges of large scale extreme weather effects pyro and atmosphere that would be critical to increase the dramatic look of the locations. We would also begin design of the Airlock / Space flower cave/ the driving sequence and prepare to repeat all the weather effects for the LA shoot onstage only 3 weeks later.

The look of the sets, propping and wardrobe would all have a familiar and grounded yet playful sci-fi vibe. Futuristic without being too real, complicated or slick. A retro modern and space aged vibe that would allow the real futurism of the iPhone to stand out.

Knowing that most of our world would be arctic landscapes in cool tones we opted for warm tones to stand off the landscapes. The palette for the sets and costumes would be a mix of steely blues, silver large punches of international orange for strong contrast.



CRASH CONCEPT

A CONCEPT COMES ALIVE AND AN IDEA BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

Based on the very compressed calendar I knew we needed to approach this as efficiently as possible.

To save time and working with limited resources we would use the environment to our advantage and build something half scale that we would bury in snow.

I asked Art Director **Victor Petur** to see if there were any oversized unusually shaped pieces we could repurpose to build a spacecraft out of.

He cleverly sourced a fiberglass boat mold that would become the body. We quickly went to work while still scouting for a location for this vignette.



CONCEPT ART BY ILLUSTRATOR JAMIE RAMA



REFERENCE IMAGES



REFERENCE IMAGES



REFERENCE IMAGES



REFERENCE IMAGES

DYLAN KAHN

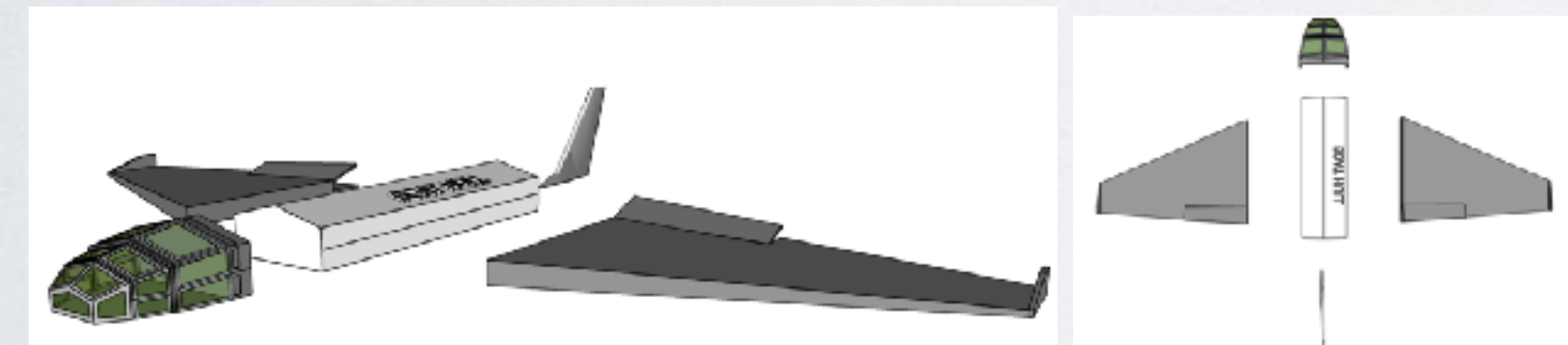
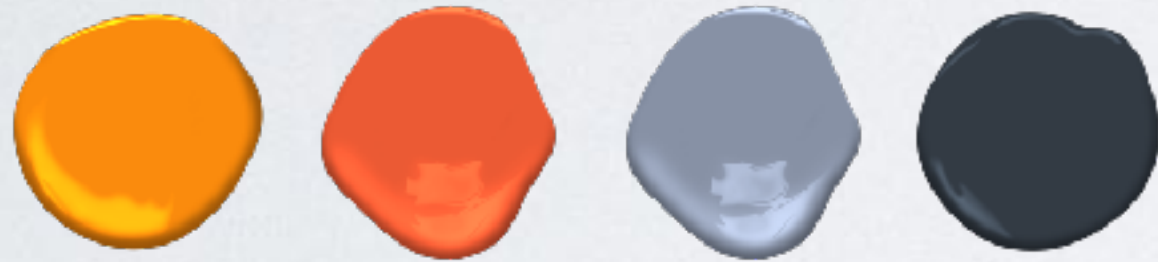
PRODUCTION DESIGN

At a total of 44' long with a 16' tall twin tail section, 6 engines were fashioned from Ikea trash cans and two 24' delta wings that were built to be buried under snow.

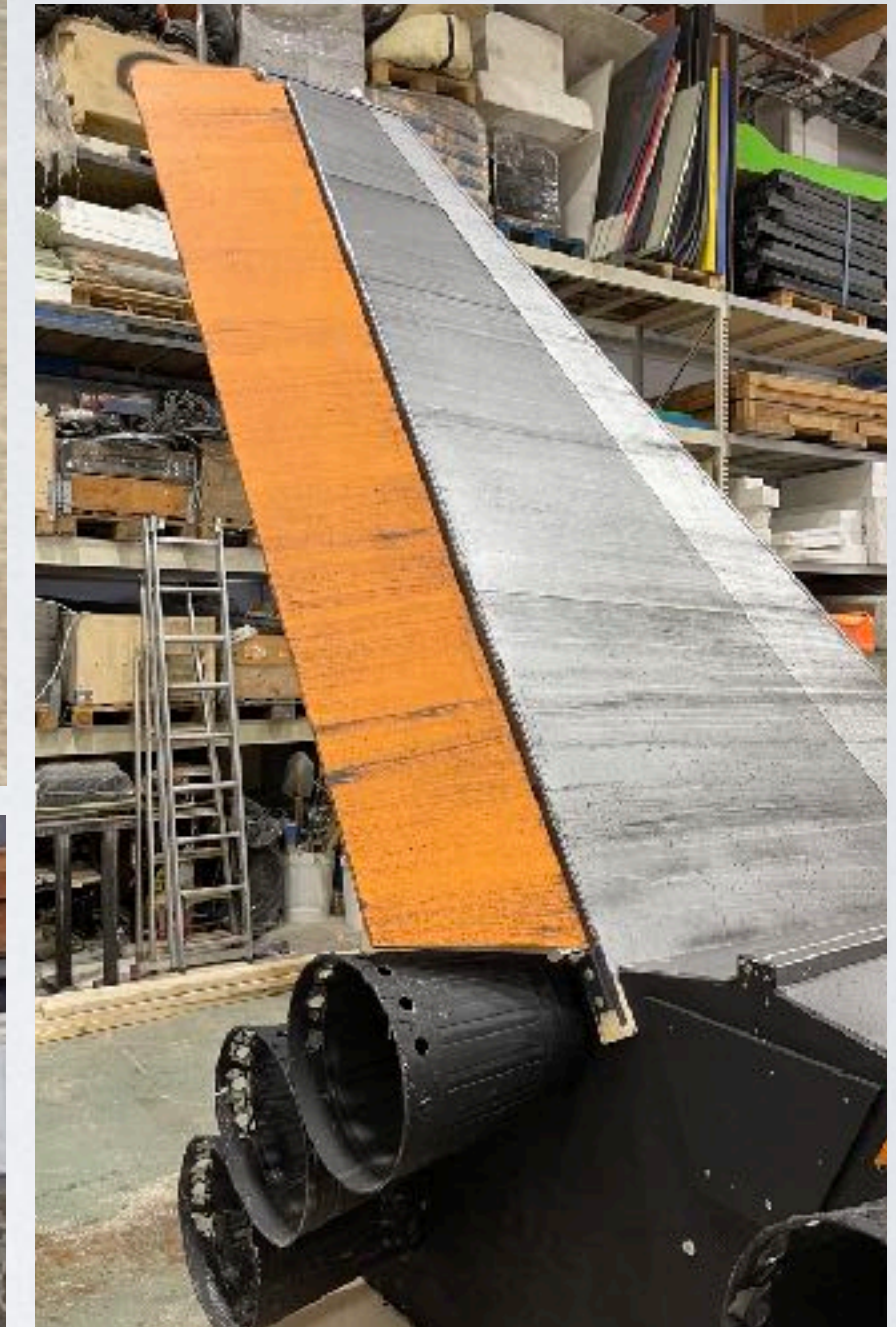
The cockpit was a metal glass and perforated steel structure to allow for lighting. It was then attached to the boat mold on location.

For the installation we created a 200' long trench on the ice which was dug by using an ice breaker, a excavator and a bulldozer. The ice was then fed into a chipper and snow blower to create snow to bury the body.

We created A 150' debris field consisting of painted sheet metal and styrene, various car parts and construction materials which were painted and aged with black sand and ash to give it a scorched look as though it had crashed onto the frozen planet.



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CONSIDERATION





CRASH SITE INSTALL

The completed set was installed and pre rigged for special effects 2 days ahead of the scheduled shoot.

Covid exposure in a safety meeting put over a dozen key crew and department heads into mandatory 7 day quarantine putting the entire shoot in doubt. Unexpected extreme weather arrived after a few days of high winds, rain & hail. A glacial shift and cracking created an unsafe situation that prevented the company from shooting this piece on location as planned. Facing a hard client deadline & product launch we had little option other than to try and shoot what we could , so we pushed on.

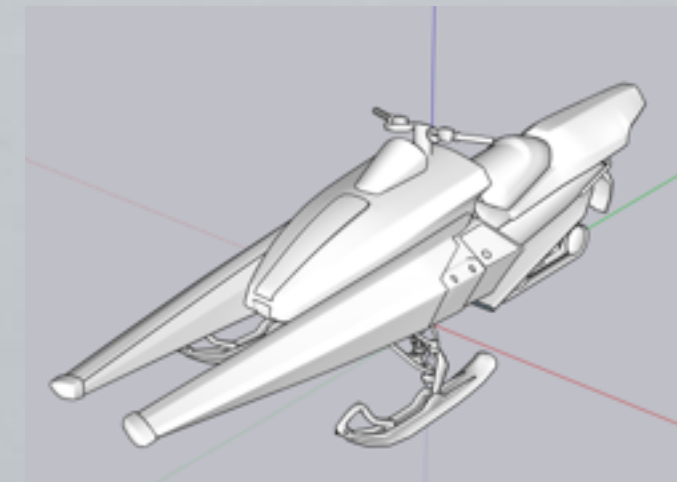
Fortunately we were able to shoot some plates that could later be projected in the background at the Volume Stage. The projection coupled with practical weather effects on stage we were still able to make use of this set. Although not our initial plan, that is part of the adventure in production. Responding to change and finding solutions.

The set could not be safely removed for 9 days due to weather in Iceland





VEHICLE CONCEPT & BUILD



CONCEPT ART BY ILLUSTRATOR JAMIE RAMA

The scripts also called for some vehicle -to-vehicle coverage, to showcase the ease of use for filmmakers with the devices. We wanted some futuristic snow vehicles. Again based on the short time frame and the desire to showcase the costumes **Joseph Porro** had designed, the team at **Verkstaedid** (the workshop) heavily modified two snowmobiles both mechanically and aesthetically. Each with its own subtle differences and character.

We created our own body panels and used some existing bolt patterns to attach structures that would support the front extensions and lights. The front skis and under carriages were painted white and the suspension was modified. The body panels were built from MDF, and acrylic sheets then wrapped in custom printed vinyl, painted over and then block aged before having dimensional plant on panels and graphics applied and then aged again.

The section behind the driver was also reconfigured and redesigned to house several gas, smoke and ignition units that fed the flame units added to the rear end of the machines.

It's projects and challenges like these that make working in commercials so compelling for me. I feel so fortunate to call this work.



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COMPLETED VEHICLES



SPACE FLOWER CAVE

To highlight the incredible photo prowess of the device, the script takes us to an ice cave where the explorers discover an ice flower. Detailed enough for macro shots but clear enough to look like ice and take colored light.

The team at **Amalgamated Dynamics** was able to artfully sculpt and mold the flower in clear resin.

Roland Hathaway and the **Snow Business** team were instrumental in not just helping us achieve the snow storms on stage, but also to fabricate multiple ice surfaces needed for several shots in concert with the the incredibly skilled people at **Vision scenery**



CONCEPT ART BY ILLUSTRATOR JAMIE RAMA

PRODUCTION STILLS



AIRLOCK DESIGN

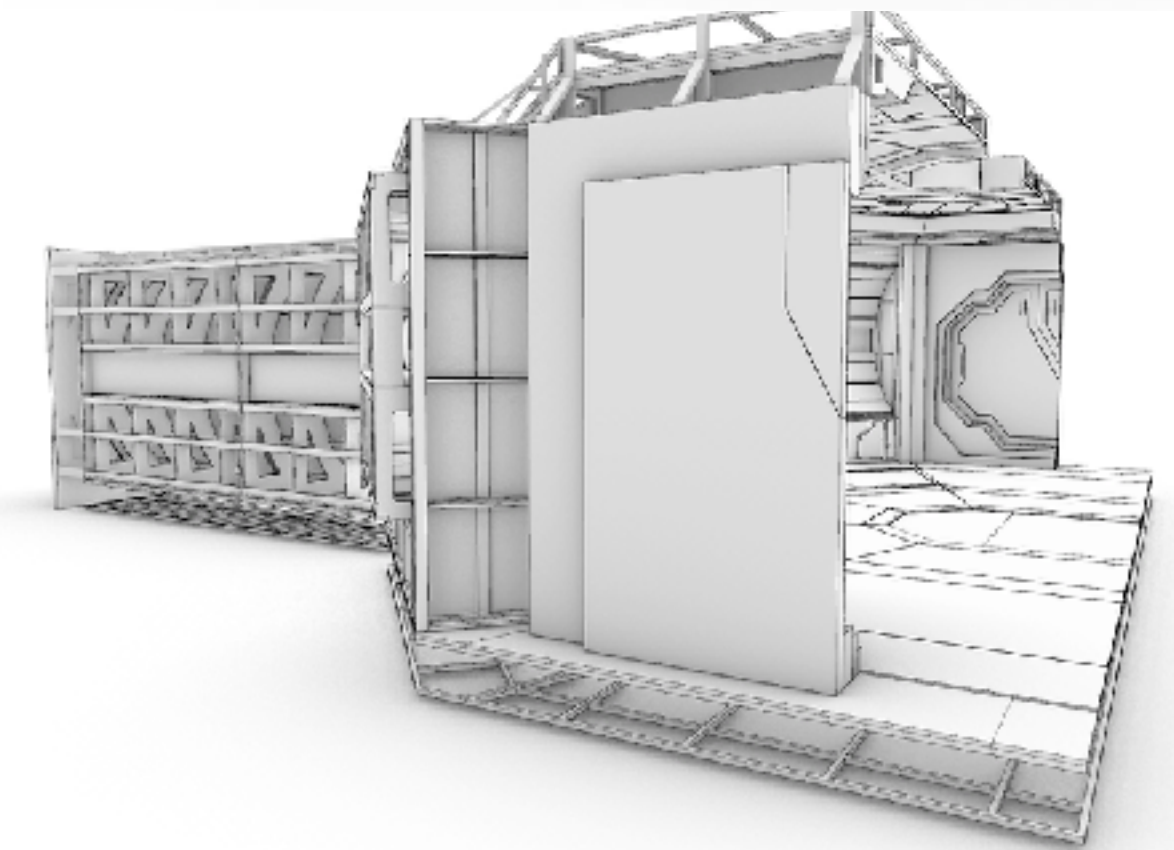
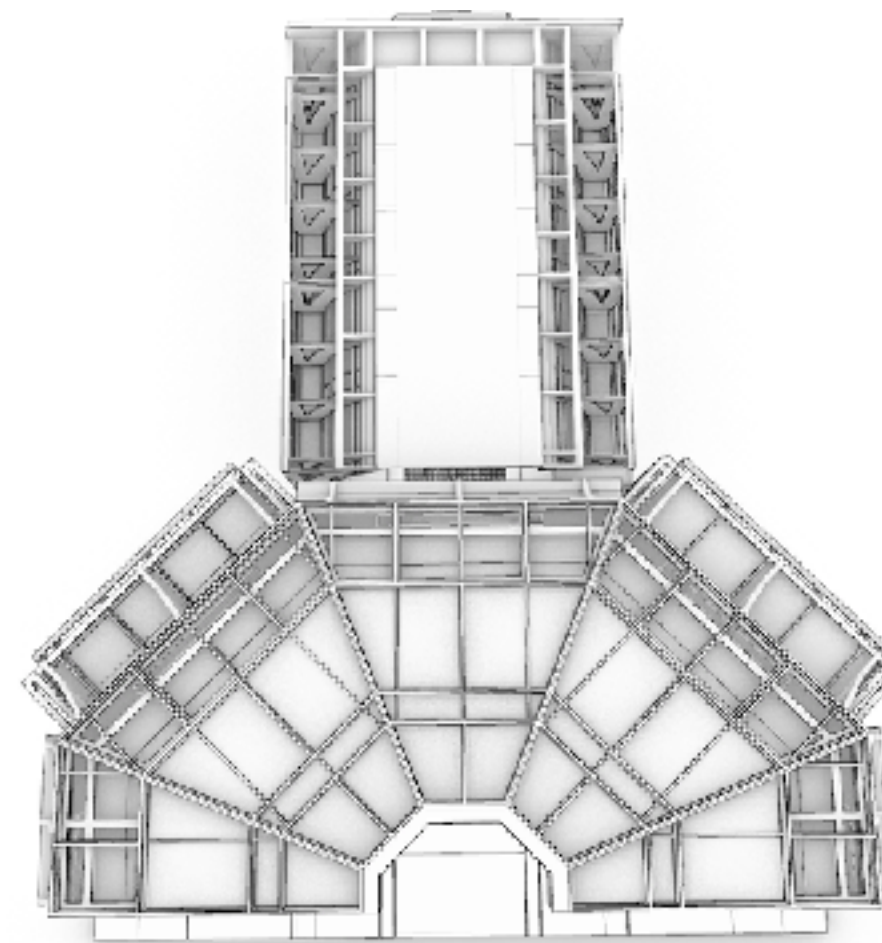
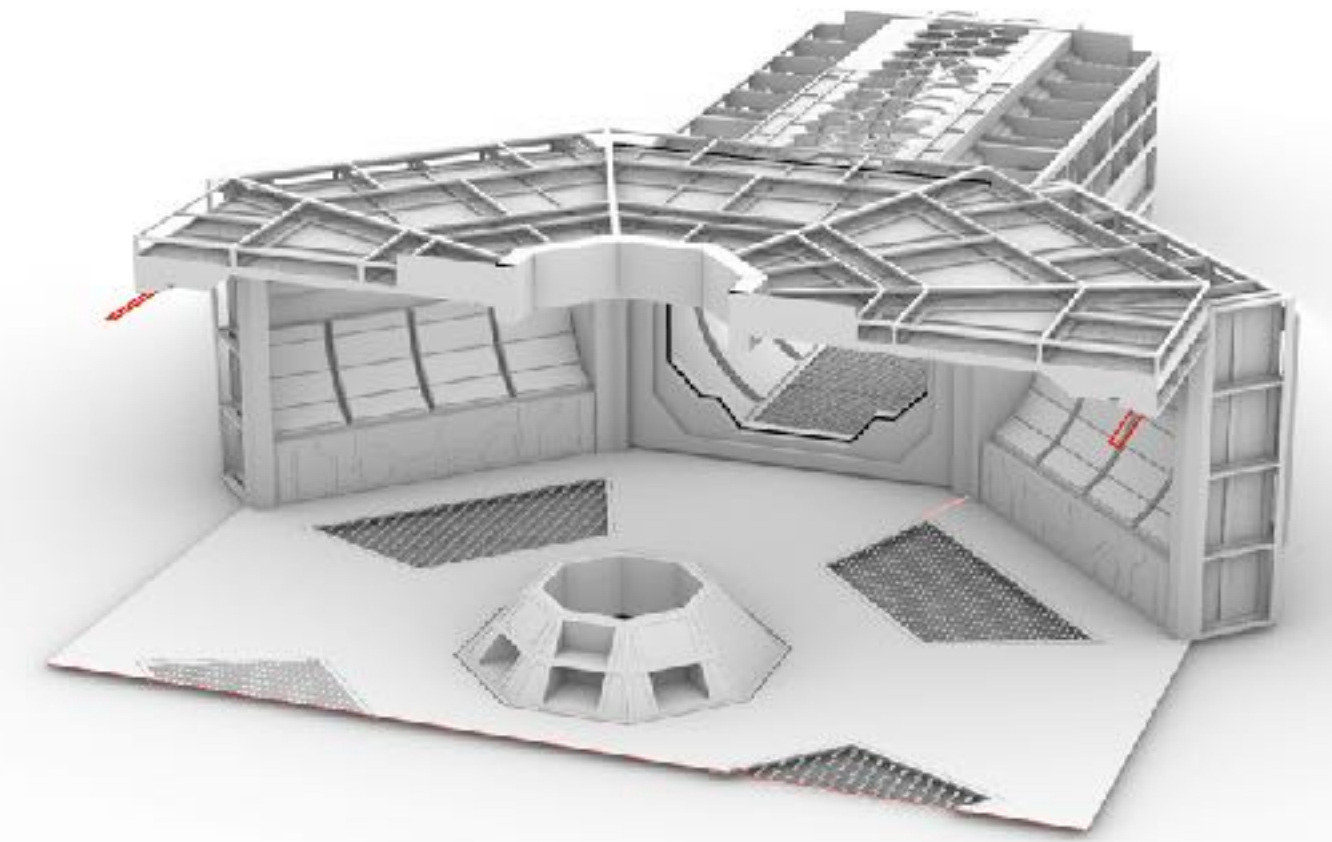
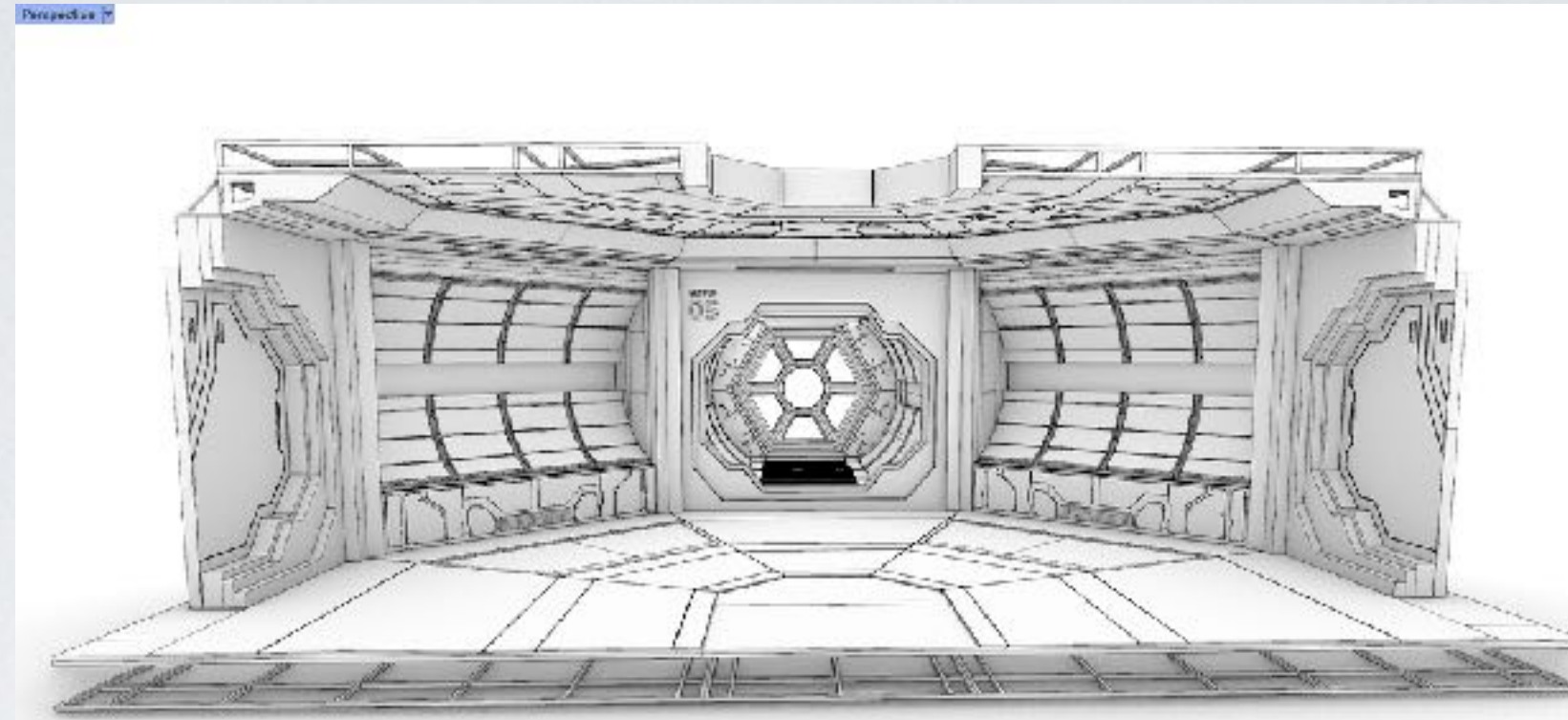
To complete our adventure both on screen and off, we end our story with the devices being used on a spaceship airlock set. As with the other sets we adhered to a minimal look inspired by so many beautifully designed science fiction films.

This was shot on stage at the 204 XR Volume stage Los Angeles upon our return from Iceland. We had one day to shoot this and needed to clear the set by the end of day to allow us to set up for other shots the following day. This created a logistical challenge for the art department.

I proposed putting the set on wheeled sections and the incredibly talented art director **Raymundo Enriquez** was able to make this a seamless process.

We designed and built the set as a semicircle that was sectioned in 6 wedges, like slices of pie.

To keep the costs down and save some fabrication time we did as much integrated lighting as we could, however wherever that wasn't possible we created as many opportunities for tube and panel lighting in the design phase to help streamline the lighting process.



REFERENCE IMAGES



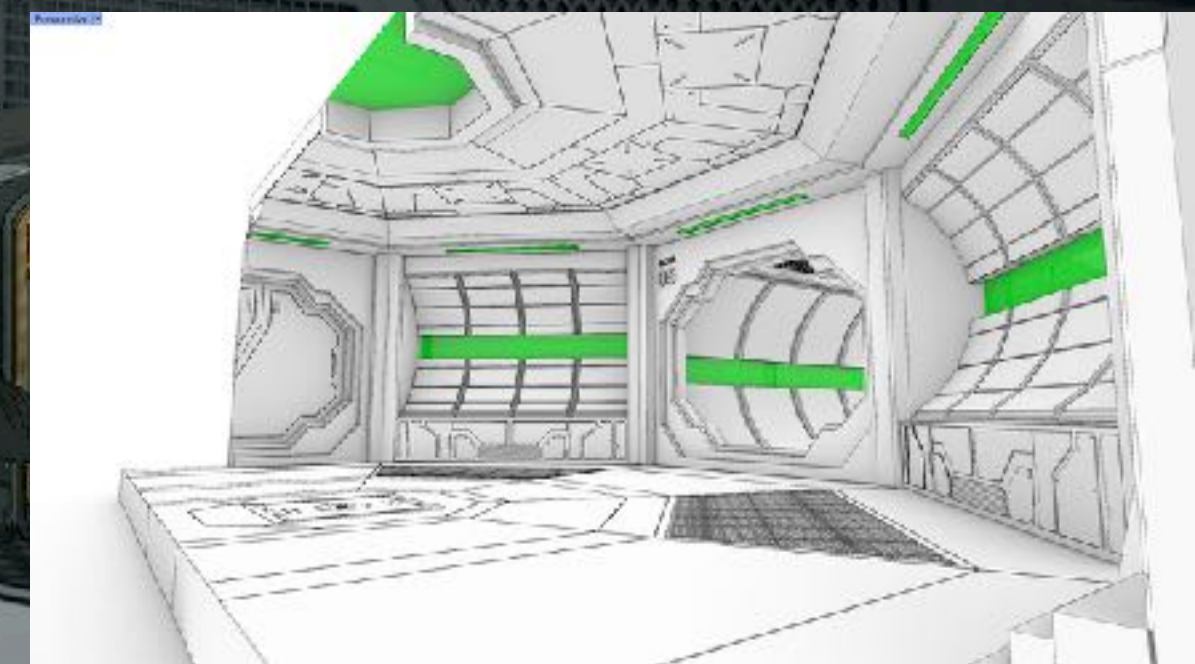
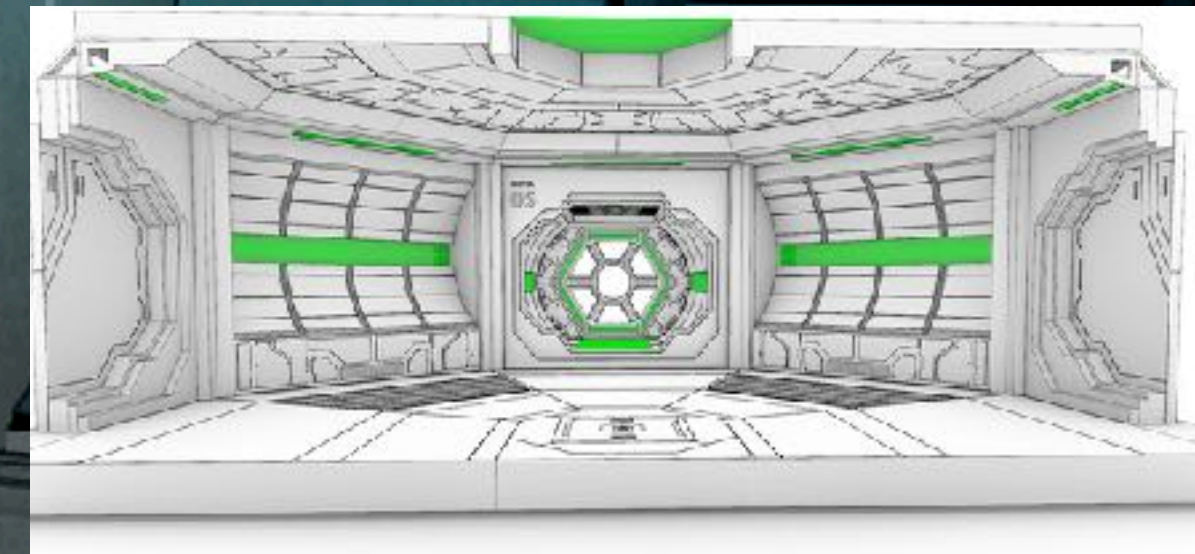
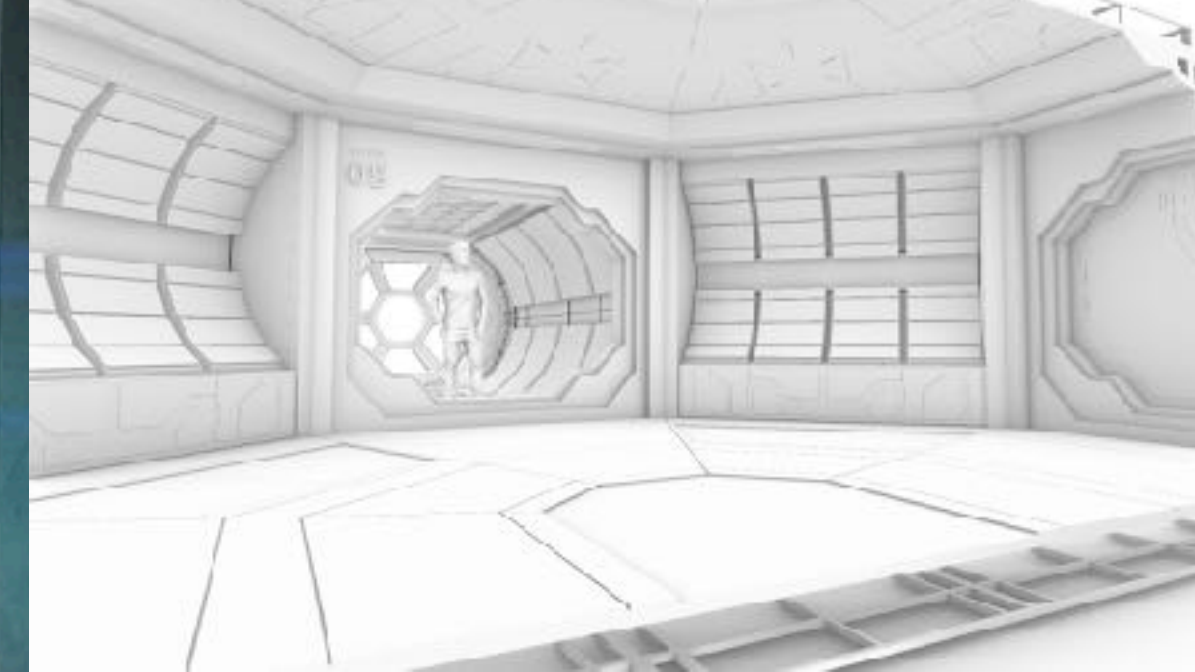
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MODELS CREATED BY ART DIRECTOR MUNDO ENRIQUEZ

AIRLOCK MODELS & CONCEPT



DYLAN KAHN
PRODUCTION DESIGN

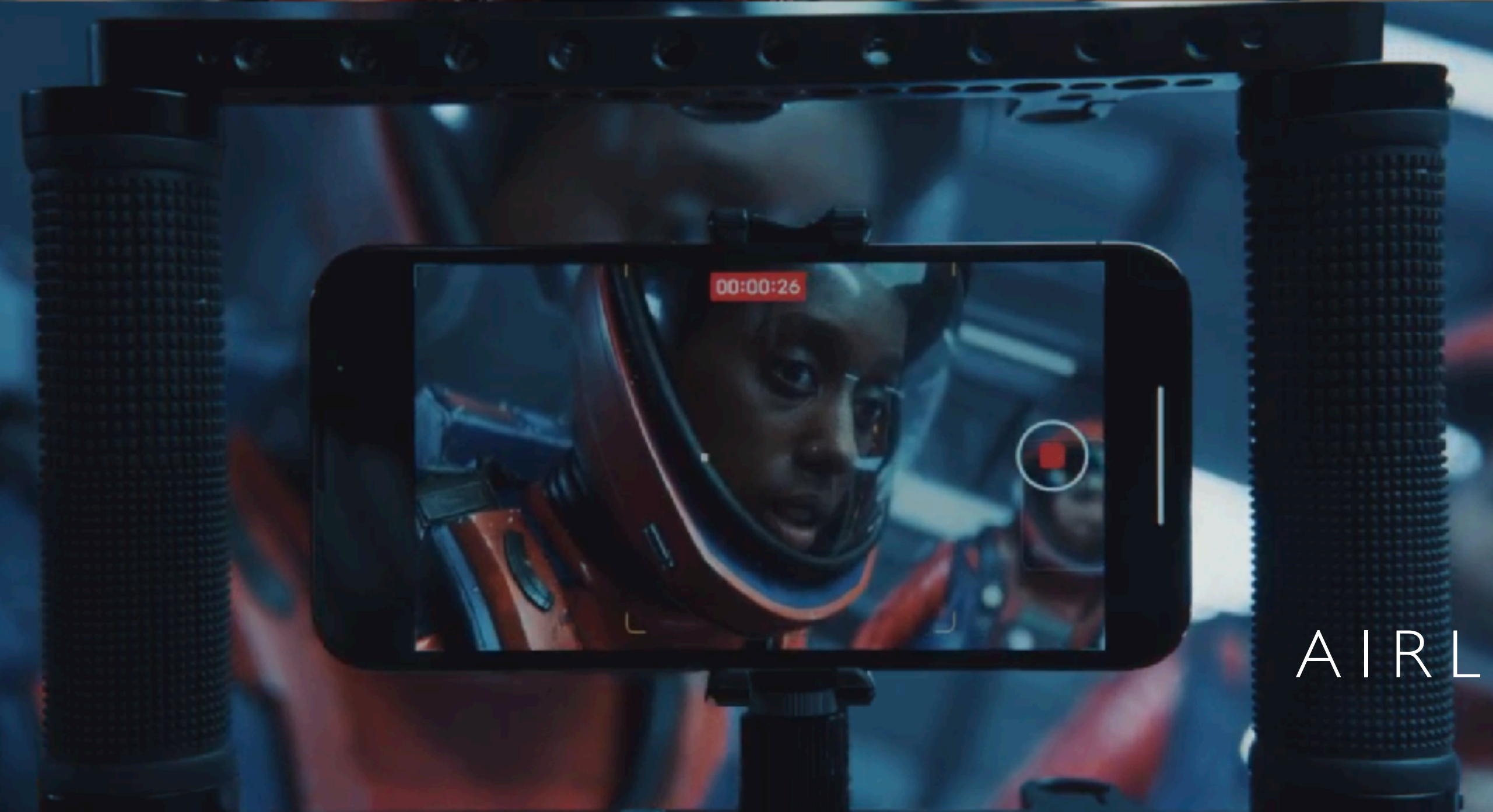
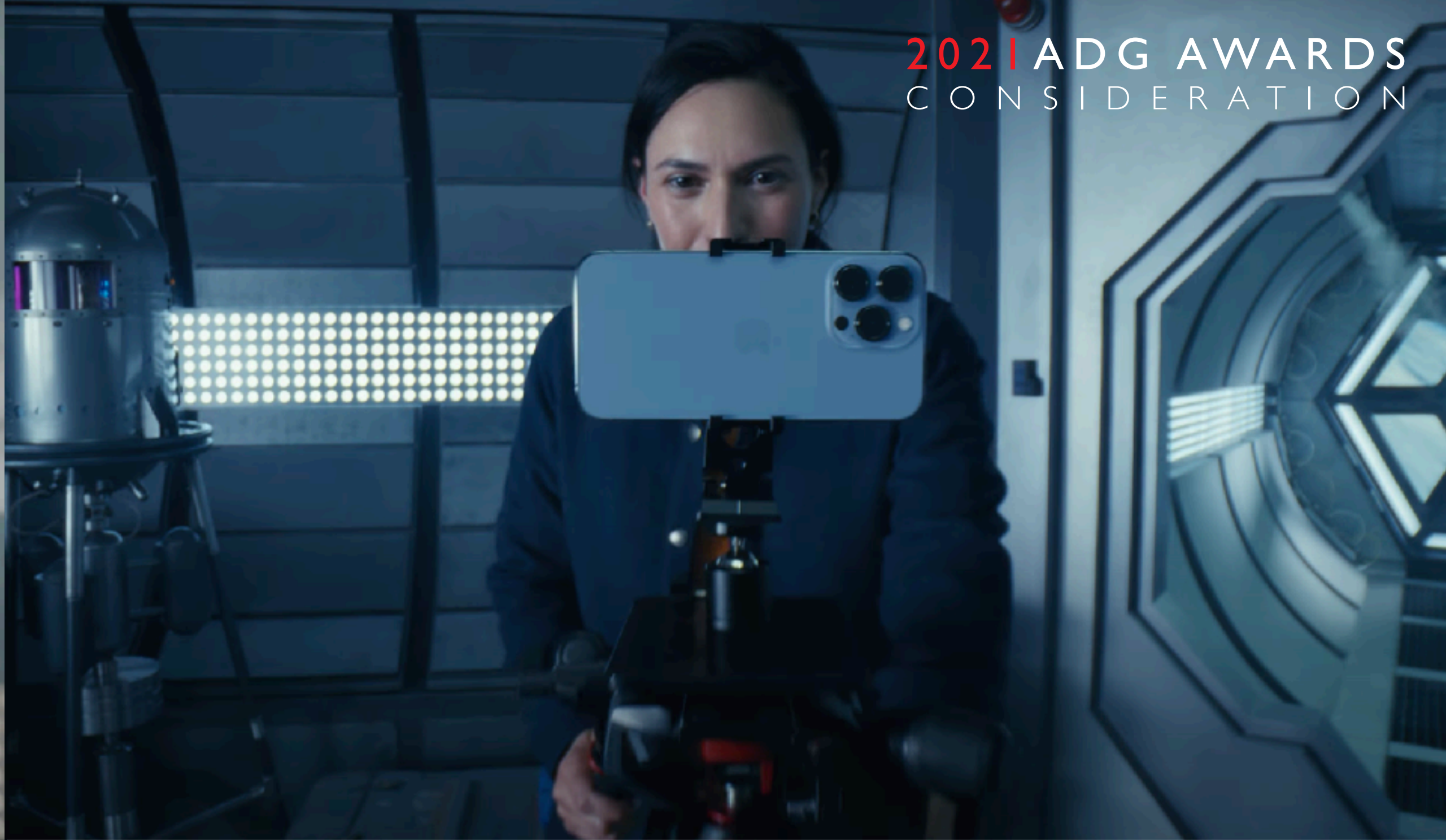
AIRLOCK SET CONSTRUCTION

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THE FINISHED AIRLOCK



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🍏 “TAUN TAUN” RESET CONTENT 🔌

Diego Contreras : Director
Paul Meyers ASC : Director of Photography

Dylan Kahn : Production Designer

US ART CREW

Raymundo Enriquez : Art Director

Alicia Gerken : Asst. Art Director

Jamie Rama : Illustrator

Kory Bell : Illustrator

Damaris Dragonas : Set Decorator

Vince Pearson : Propmaster

ICELAND ART CREW

Victor Petur : Art Director

Pedro Romero : Art Director

Arnar Fridbjarnarson : Set Designer

Hafpor Waldorff : Set Decorator

Dora Hrund Gisladdottir : Propmaster

THANK YOU!

