STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

EP 101 PRESENTATION

STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA SHIP

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA SHIP


CONCEPT ART


CONCEPT ART


CONCEPT ART

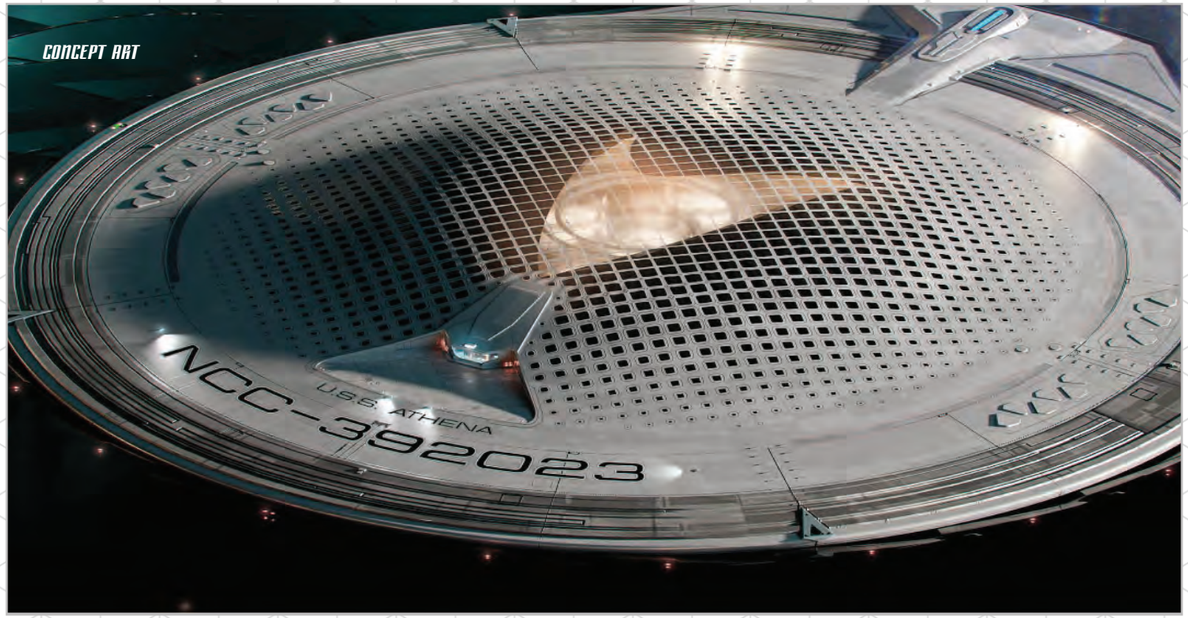
STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

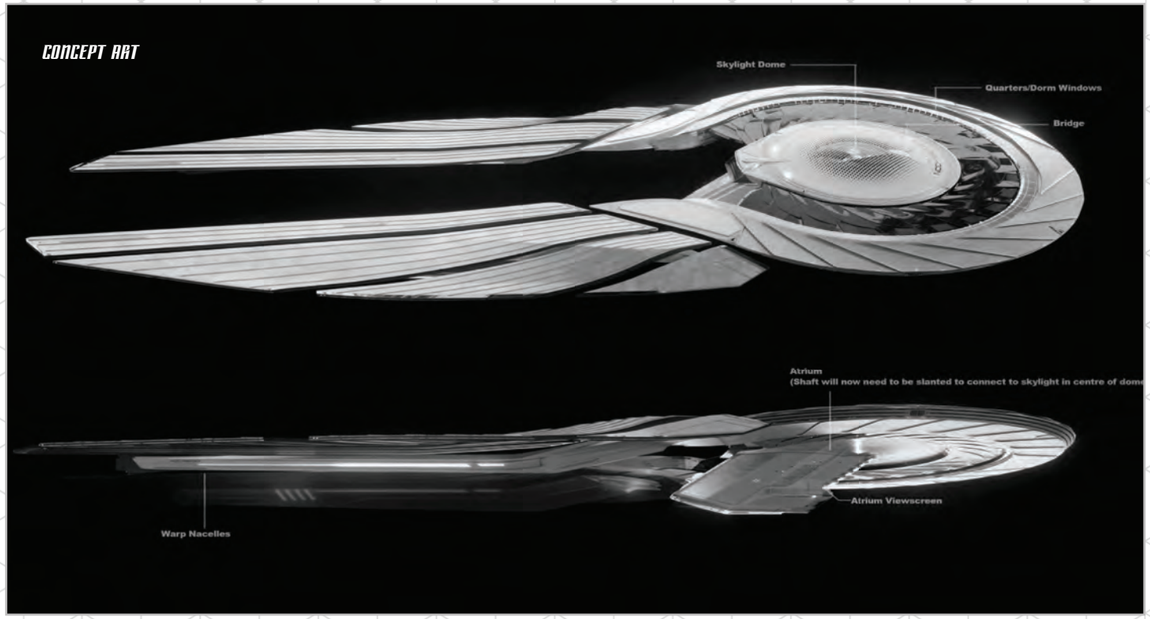
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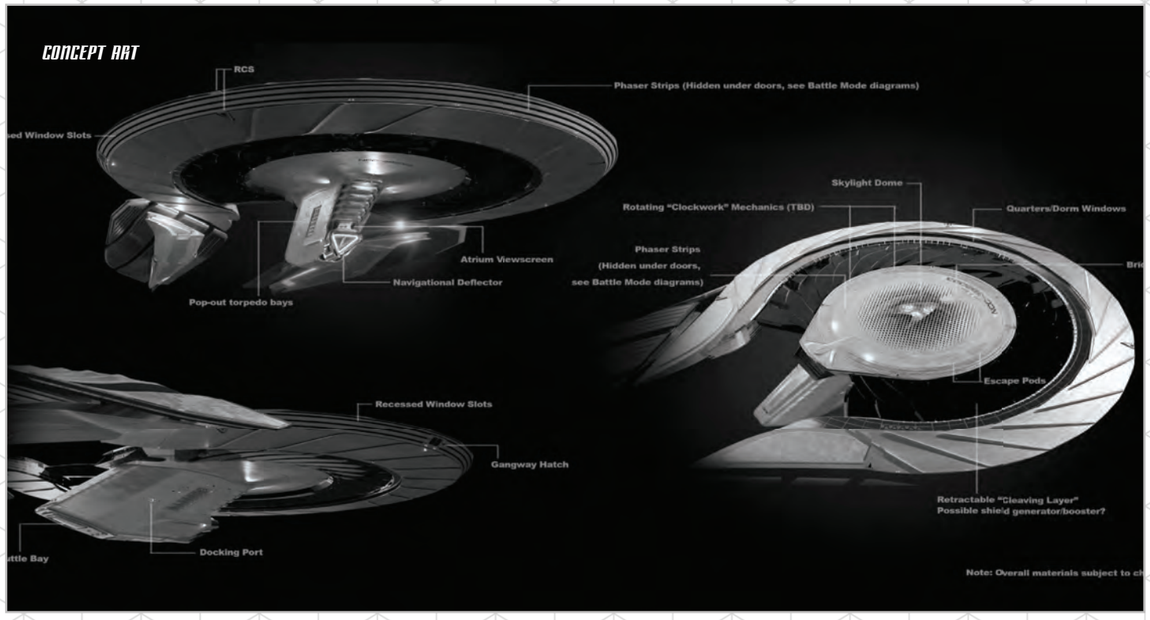
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U.S.S. ATHENA SHIP









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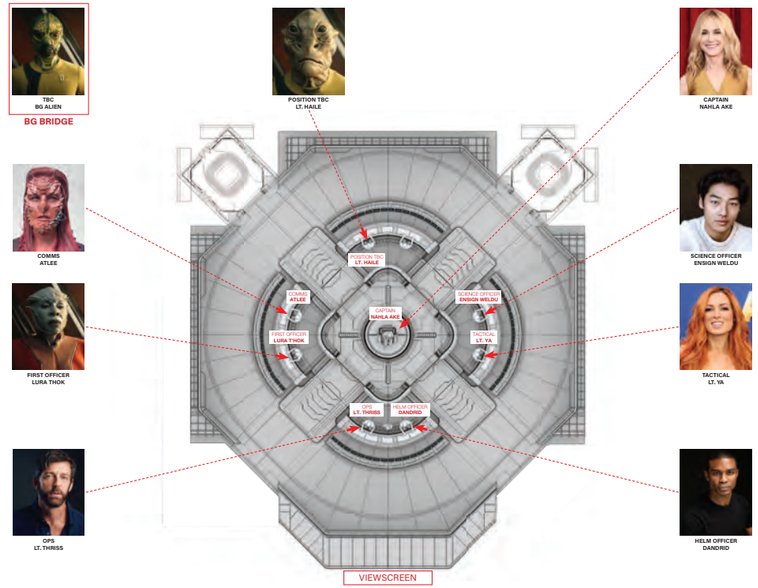
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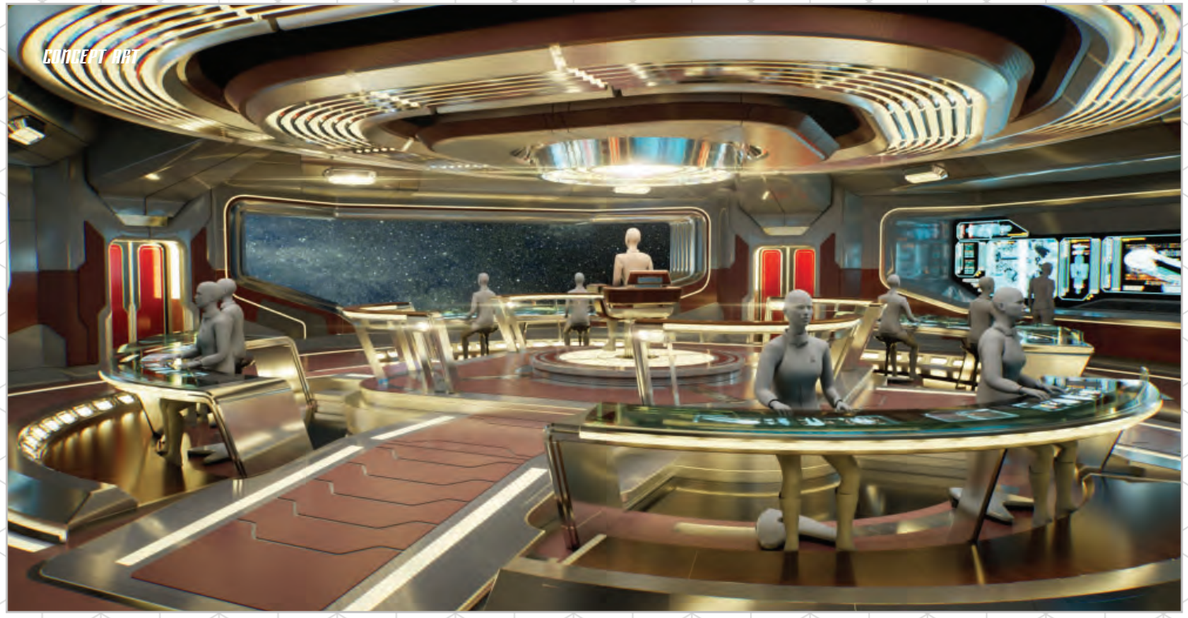
ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA BRIDGE

DIRECTOR'S PLAN









STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

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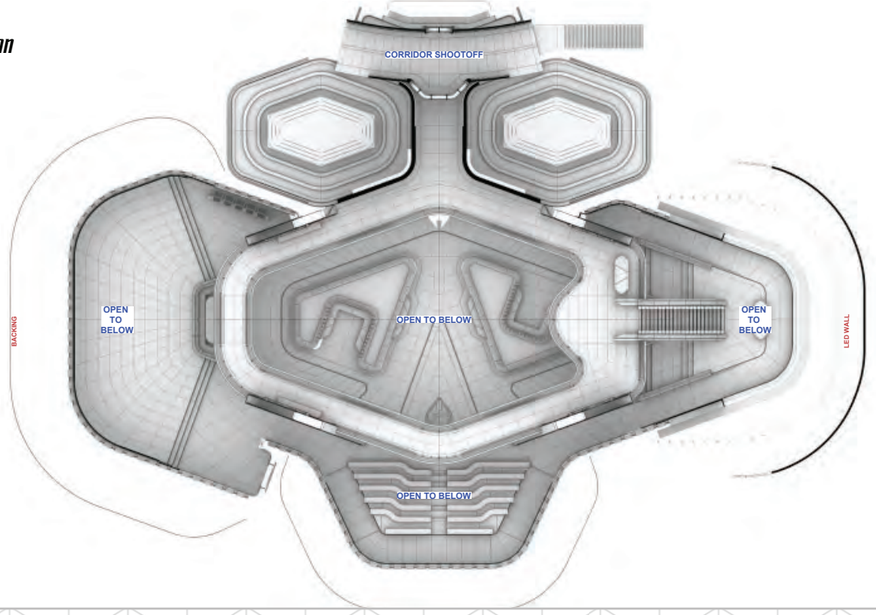
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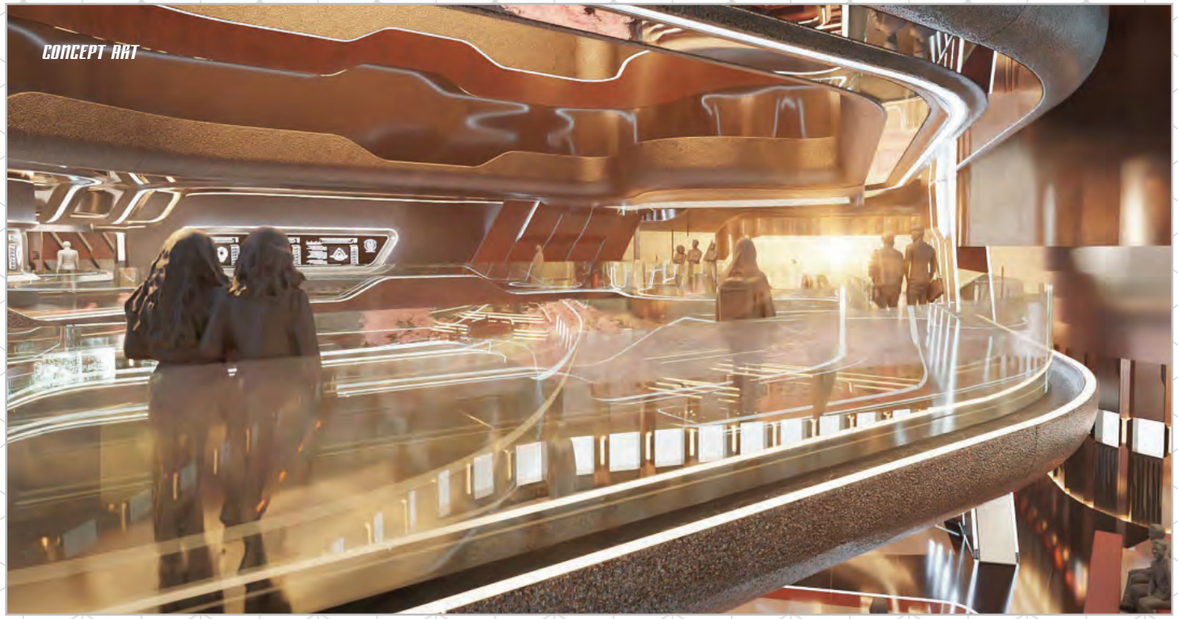
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JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA ATRIUM

DIRECTOR'S PLAN









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JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA ATRIUM


CAMERA STILL


CAMERA STILL


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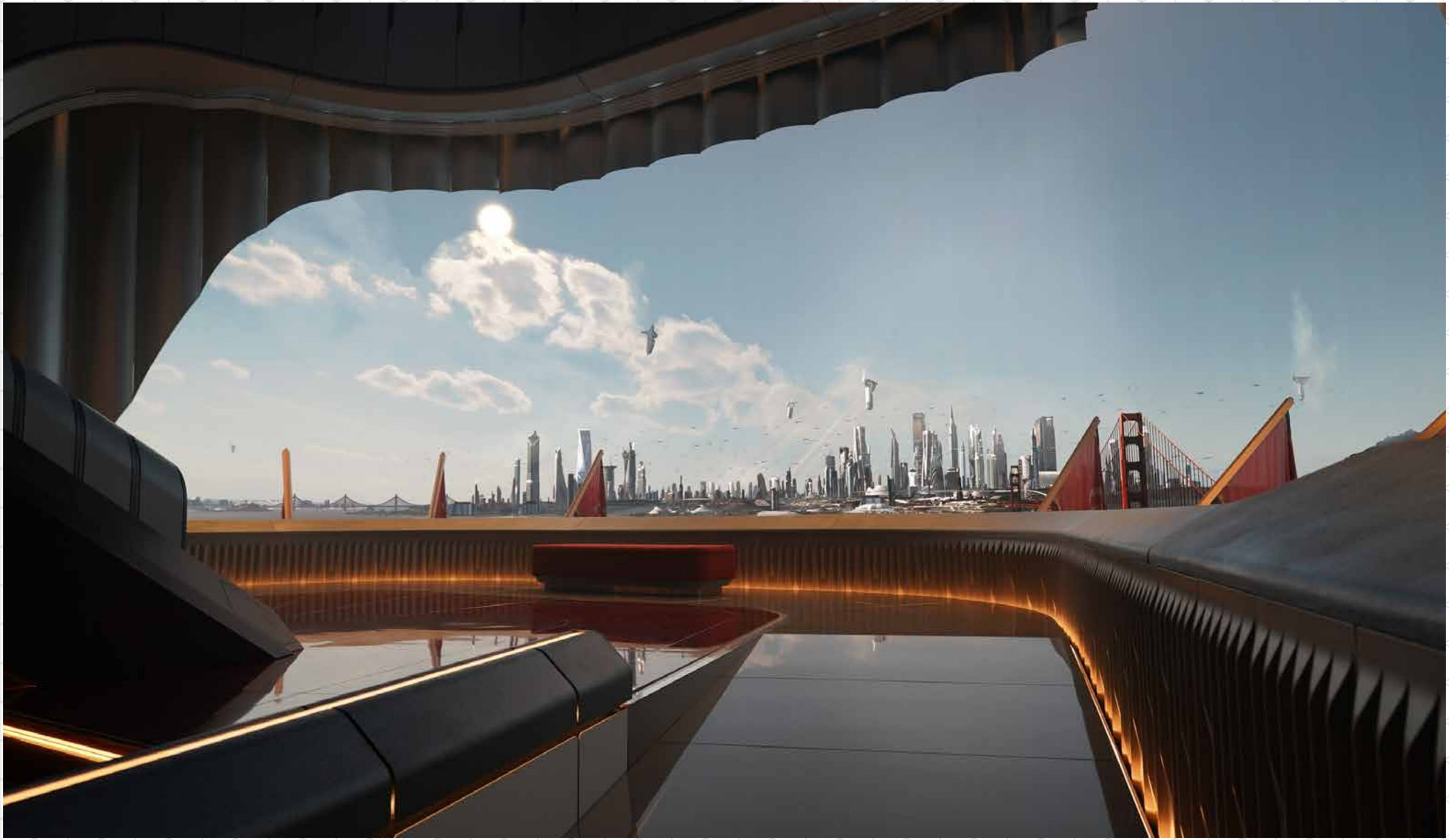


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CAMERA STILL




CAMERA STILL


CAMERA STILL

STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

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JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)



STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA SHIP CLASSROOM

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)



STARFLEET ACADEMY

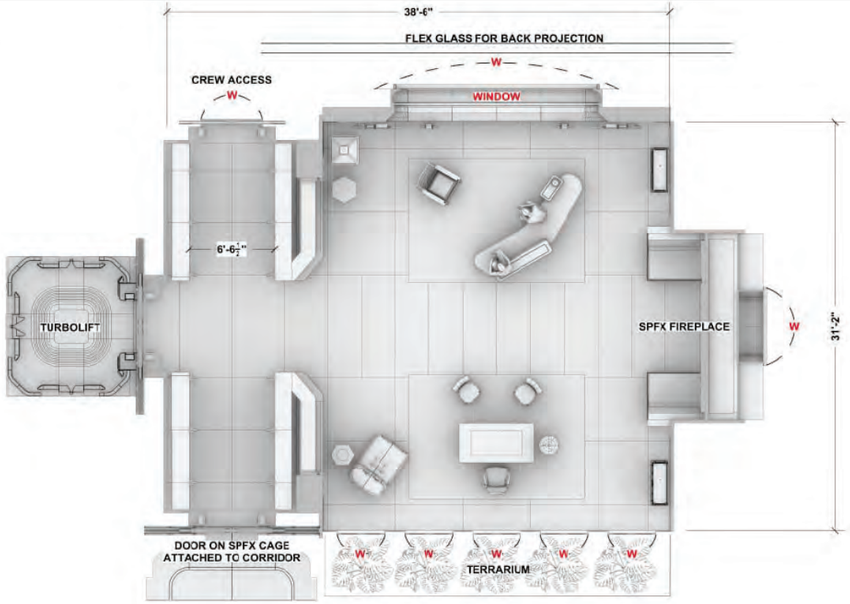
SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA SHIP CLASSROOM

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

DIRECTOR'S PLAN



CONCEPT ART



CONCEPT ART



CONCEPT ART



STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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U.S.S. ATHENA CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE


CAMERA STILL


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STARFLEET ACADEMY

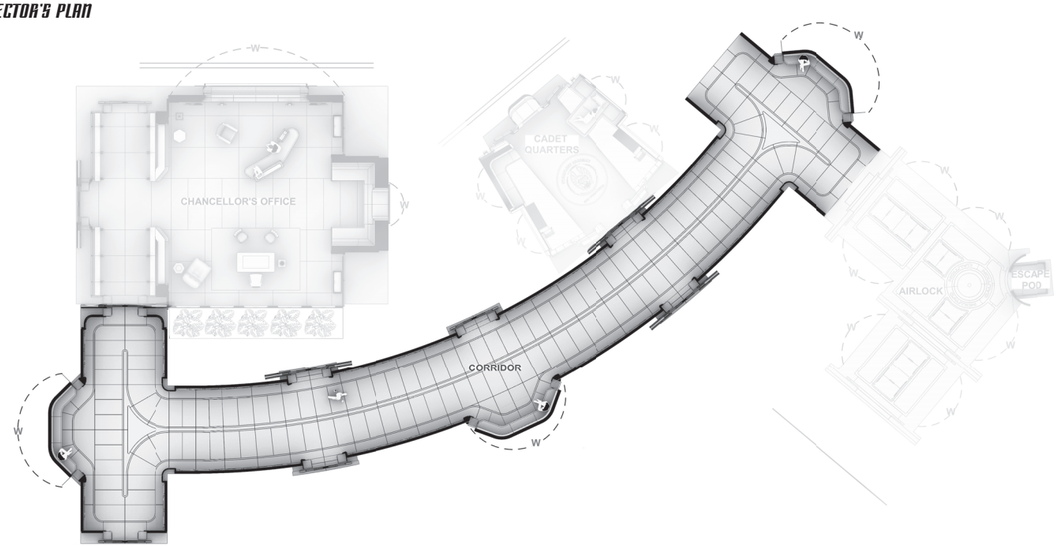
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ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA CORRIDOR

DIRECTOR'S PLAN



CAMERA STILL



CONCEPT ART



CAMERA STILL

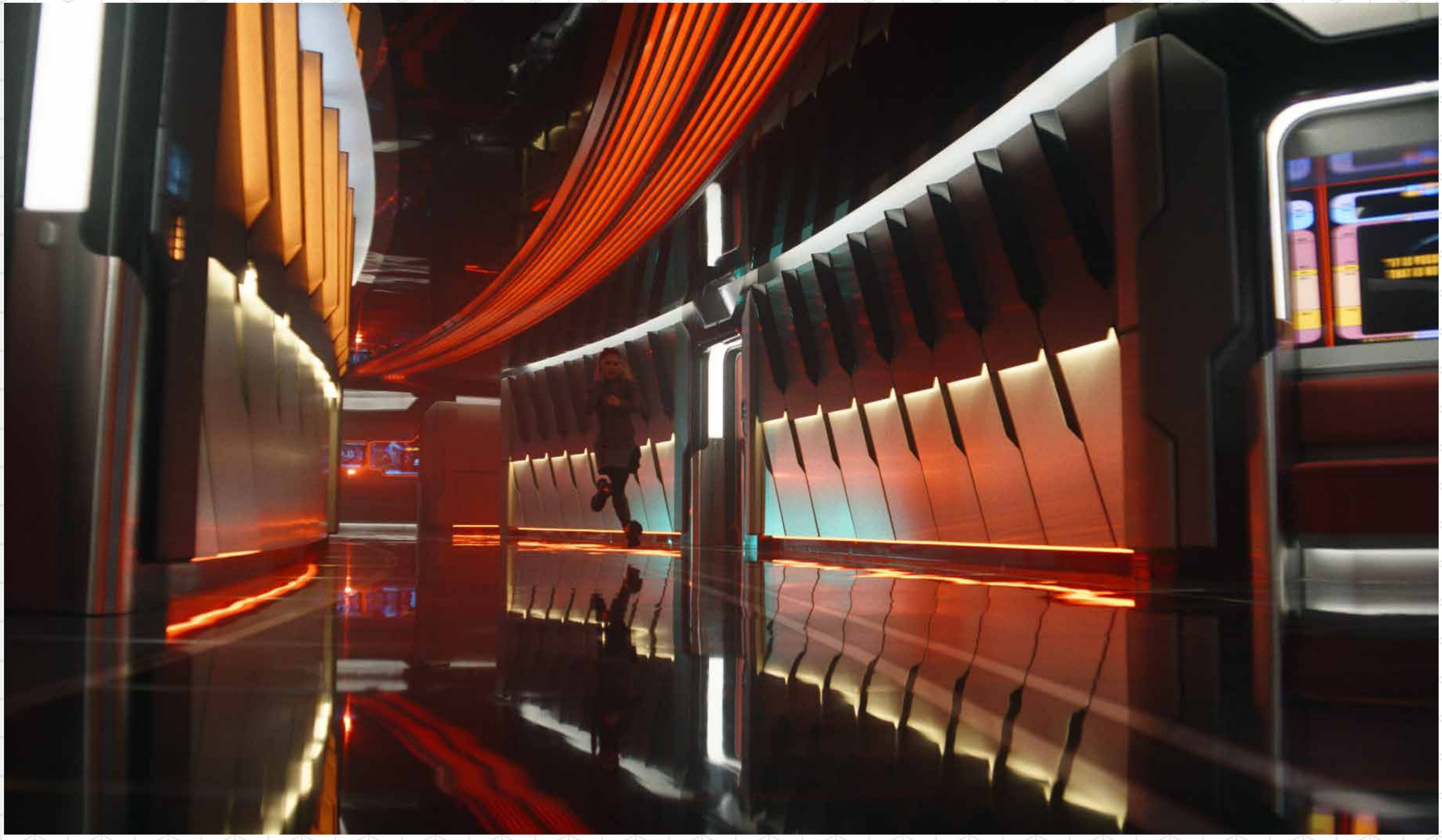


STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

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SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA CORRIDOR

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ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA DORM



CONCEPT ART


CAMERA STILL


CAMERA STILL


CAMERA STILL

STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA DORM

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)



STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA DORM

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA AIRLOCK


CONCEPT ART


CAMERA STILL


CAMERA STILL


CAMERA STILL

STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME U.S.S. ATHENA AIRLOCK

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JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)



STARFLEET ACADEMY

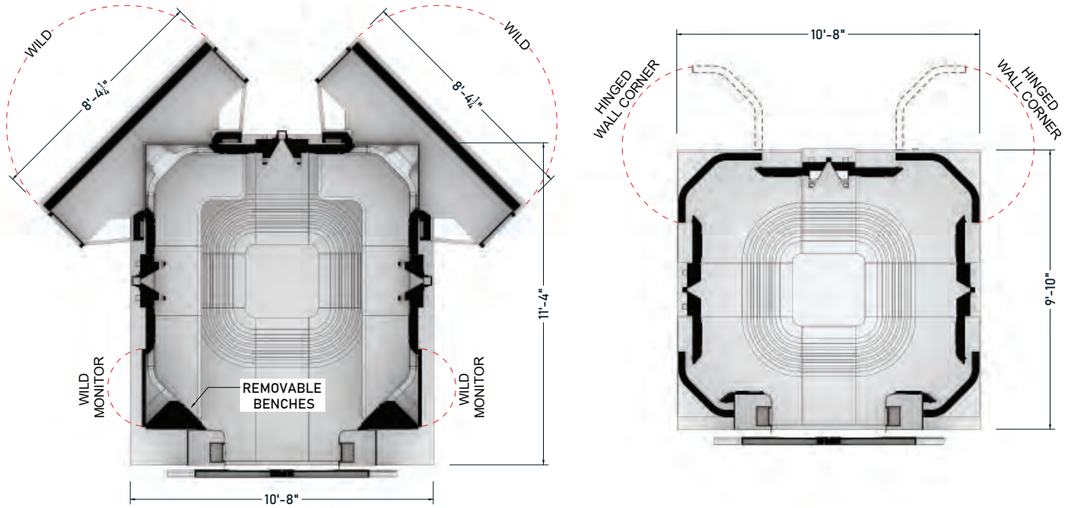
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ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA TURBOLIFT

DIRECTOR'S PLAN



CAMERA STILL



CONCEPT ART



CAMERA STILL



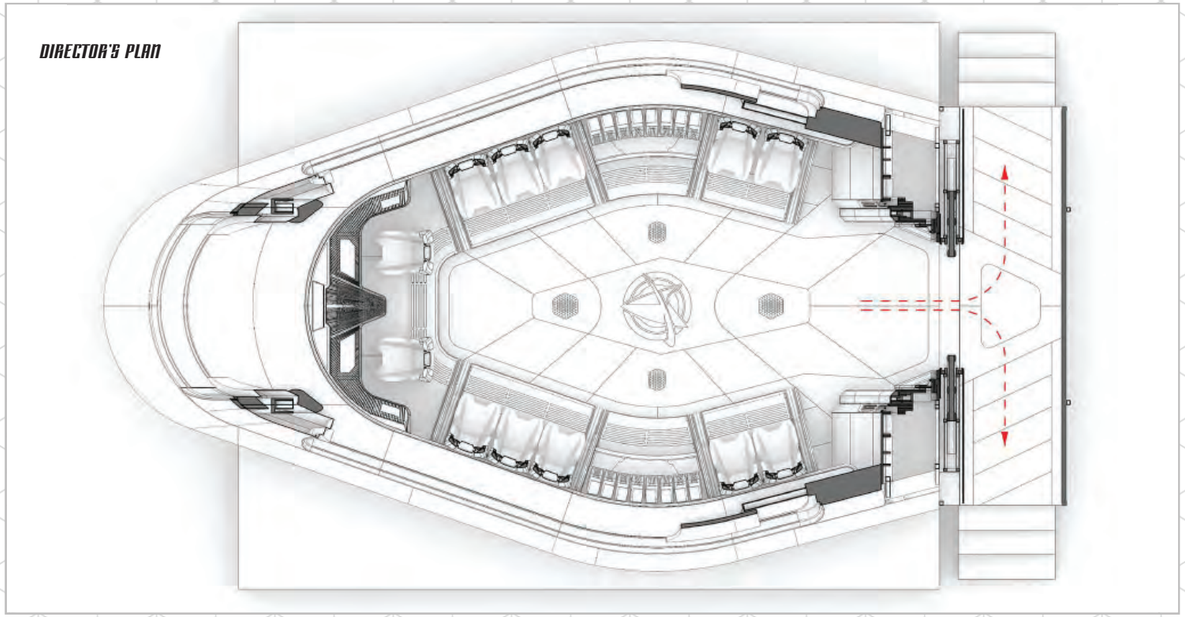
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ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

U.S.S. ATHENA SHUTTLE


DIRECTOR'S PLAN


CAMERA STILL


CONCEPT ART


CAMERA STILL

STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

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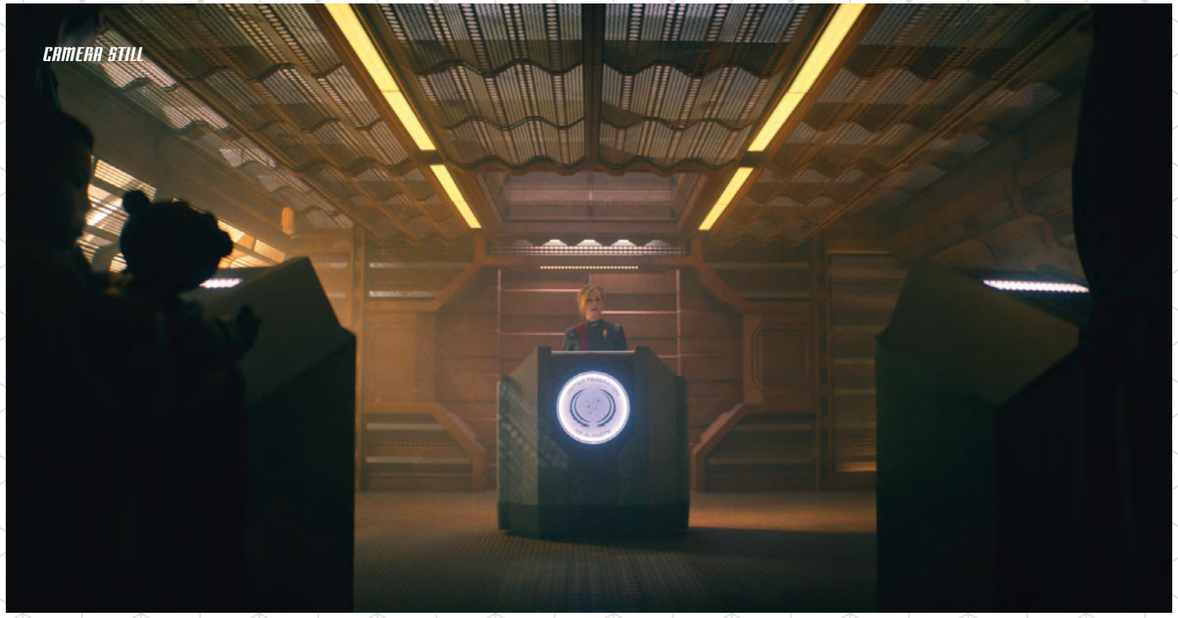
ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

PIKARU SETTLEMENT


CONCEPT ART


CAMERA STILL


CONCEPT ART


CAMERA STILL

STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME PIKARU SETTLEMENT

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
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JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

STARFLEET ACADEMY

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SET NAME PIKARU SETTLEMENT

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

TOROTHAN SHUTTLE









STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME TOROTHAN SHUTTLE

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)

STARFLEET ACADEMY CAMPUS


CONCEPT ART


FULL CG SHOT


CAMERA STILL


CONCEPT ART

STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE

SET NAME STARFLEET ACADEMY CAMPUS

ENTRANTS MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)



Star Trek: Starfleet Academy

EXPLORING AN ENDLESS UNIVERSE

BY MATTHEW DAVIES, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

It was a sweltering day in September of 2022 and I was knee-deep in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans when I got the call. Actually, it was a meticulous reconstruction of Hurricane Katrina's wake in a half-acre tank purpose-built for an Apple miniseries I was designing, but let's not digress: "Are you familiar with the show?" I'd missed the opener to this conversation, but recognized the rather stern monotone voice as belonging to Frank Siracusa, a prodigious and oftentimes intimidating Toronto producer. "Which show." "*Star Trek*..." Long pause... "Well, I've seen the show." But had I? I racked my brain to remember and I drifted back to what was ingrained as perhaps my earliest intact memory—a curious four-year-old sitting cross-legged in front of the television in the living room of my childhood home in King City, a sleepy suburb of rural Ontario.

Images of William Shatner in a tight spandex suit wrestling with a rubber monster percolated through the mists of almost fifty years. Not a good start. Not only was I unfamiliar with the show, I was woefully inexperienced at designing sci-fi in general. My brain froze as I contemplated the situation. Why call me? Over the years, I'd been hired for all sorts of reasons—because people loved my work on *Hannibal*, because I was known for designing detailed period reconstructions, but never science fiction.

Everything I knew was from the past, never the future, although the idea had always intrigued me. Yes, I'd caught glimpses of *Trek* over the years, but it felt like a family to which I'd never belong.

I'd always given so much thought to creating plausible realities for on-camera characters, with all the rough edges that really define human existence. What would a perfect world feel like, where holograms look solid, where programmable matter can transform and where almost anything can materialize out of thin air? Take away all the rules of this reality and what is left? Anything... and maybe nothing? As the longest running sci-fi franchise in television history, *Star Trek* shows the pitfalls of science fiction—each generation imagines a future based on the zeitgeist of the future-present. Hence the reason Eero Saarinen's forms feature so heavily in the original series, why carpeting abounds in *The Next Generation* and why *Voyager* feels so distinctly nineties...is anything timeless or is everything somehow anchored in the present? And with *Starfleet Academy*, there were structural paradoxes in the storytelling—how to tell a story set in San Francisco that also wants to be a space adventure; how to depict life on campus when the format relies so heavily on the infinite potential of space. And then there are the fans, stalwart protectors of Rodenberry's legacy and oftentimes critics of Kurtzman's narrative

A. STARFLEET ACADEMY CAMPUS IN SAN FRANCISCO. CONCEPT ILLUSTRATION BY LEE FITZGERALD. SHOWING THE METAMORPHOSIS OF STARSHIP *ATHENA* INTO THE STARFLEET CAMPUS.

B. EXTERIOR *USS ATHENA* CONCEPT ILLUSTRATION BY LEE FITZGERALD. SHOWING THE UNDERSIDE OF *ATHENA* WITH ITS NACELLE COVERS RETRACTED.

C. *USS ATHENA* BRIDGE LEAD ACTOR HOLLY HUNTER AT THE HELM OF THE BRIDGE WITH HER KEY CREW ARRANGED IN CIRCULAR FASHION AT CONSOLES. PRODUCTION STILL.





Screenshot

STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE **SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE**

SET NAME **U.S.S. ATHENA SHIP**

ENTRANTS **MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)**
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
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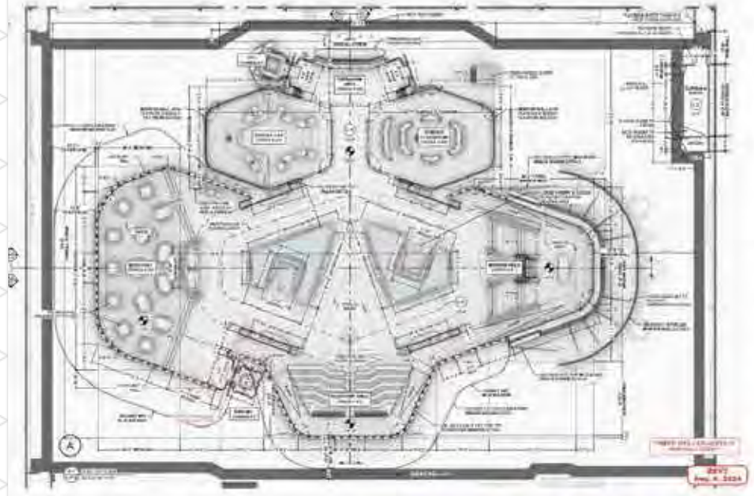
innovation…how to meet their expectations, how to create something new yet somehow familiar and contiguous with the vast canon of *Trek*.

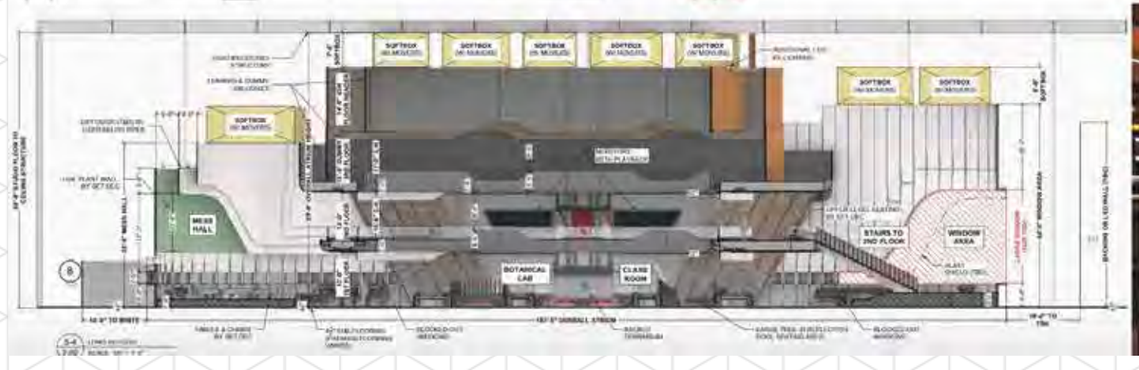
Reuse. Recycle. Reimagine. It was a gray winter's day in November 2023 when I finally started and my first call of duty was to do a set-walk of all that remained from *Discovery* to earmark which sets might be re-worked into the new franchise. Up close, the sets were a testament to the infinite resourcefulness of my predecessors—a thick crust of MDF and paint, an archeological layer-cake through five seasons of a studio-bound show. It felt like these sets had had their moment in front of camera and their story wasn't the story of *Starfleet Academy*. Moreover, each had undergone a drastic overhaul for the Paramount one-off event, *Section 31*, and had reached the end of their lifecycle. *Discovery* had been a show of small air-locked spaces, its subdued sets edged in LED ribbon-tape—*Starfleet Academy* was going to have a big ensemble cast and much of it would be set in the sunny open landscapes of the San Francisco Bay area. In the cold dark months of winter in Toronto, the optimistic, technologically perfected dream of sunny California felt so far away.

A first outline was written. Except for the very last page, there was almost no mention of an idealized campus. Instead, we had a new ship, the *Athena*, named after the Greek goddess of wisdom and protection. And one space stood out in particular, a massive 20-story atrium. Nothing like it had ever appeared in a *Star Trek* script. It was to become the heart of student life at *Starfleet Academy*, the crowning glory of the institution's rebirth after a 100-year hiatus.

Creating vertical depth is hard on camera, because the aspect ratio of modern television favors a widescreen presentation, but our sets would need to extend both upward and outward. We'd need to build tall and we'd eventually need to consider an aspect ratio for our show that complemented this conceit. There were other considerations to the space as well—our ambitious showrunners, Alex Kurtzman and Noga Landau, wanted a big exterior aspect to the space, whether we were in space at warp, cresting the atmosphere of some remote planet or on terra firma in San Francisco. And in a set of multiple levels, we'd need this window outside to be as breathtaking as the spatial volume itself. It would need to push light into every corner of our interiors, banishing the shadows of the *Discovery* era.

Every sci-fi show has its own vocabulary and *Star Trek* has always pioneered a glossy, optimistic vision of a technologically enabled society. More than ever, this became the underlying philosophy. Previous attempts at the 32nd century took the show into glowy, amorphous, curvilinear territory, however, those sets were both expensive to build and hard to shape with light. From the outset, I had a strong idea of what this language might be—it would be composed of both circles and straight lines with a geometric confidence and a chunky muscularity to its form. It would also be unexpected in its use of materials: chrome accents, mirrored ceilings and bounced architectural lighting would replace the neon-edged sets of before. And there was one valuable addition, by way of Alex Kurtzman—wood. I'd asked him what material most reminded him of his collegiate days—lots of wood! And of California—wood again, in particular the craftsman-style of building with its sumptuously fitted wood-veneered interiors. Back in my architectural days, I'd had a long-lived preoccupation with the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and together we wondered what the Prairie Style might have evolved into by the 32nd century. My partner at the time was living in Chicago and on my next visit, I toured the Roby House and was swept away by its modern flowing space, framed vignettes and overlapping geometry. The showrunners felt it resonated with the character of our captain, Nahla Ake, a member of the long-living Lanthanide species, who had coexisted with humans unnoticed for





A. *USS ATHENA* ATRIUM STAGE PLAN CREATED IN RHINO BY SET DESIGNER ALYSSIA MA, SHOWING JUMBO STAGE 4, THE LARGEST SOUNDSTAGE IN CANADA. A PIXOMONDO-OPERATED VIDEO WALL WRAPS THE SOUTH END OF THE SET.

B. *USS ATHENA* ATRIUM SECTION CREATED IN RHINO BY SET DESIGNER ALYSSIA MA, SHOWING THE 60-FT. VERTICAL EXTENT OF THE SET, WITH TWO FULLY PRACTICAL SHOOTING LEVELS.







C. *USS ATHENA* ATRIUM: ILLUSTRATION CREATED IN RHINO AND BLENDER BY ALYSSIA MA. SECOND-FLOOR VIEW LOOKING ONTO CHERRY TREES AND REFLECTING POOLS.

D. *USS ATHENA* ATRIUM: A 2-STORY VIDEO WALL ACTS AS A GIANT ANIMATED BACKDROP IN THE ATRIUM. SET PHOTO.

E. *USS ATHENA* ATRIUM: VIEW OF THE ATRIUM FROM THE MESS HALL LOOKING TOWARD THE STAIRS AND VIDEO WALL. SET PHOTO.

F. NAHLA'S OFFICE: ILLUSTRATION BY NELSO CHENG CREATED IN RHINO AND V-RAY. THE VIEW FROM THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT-INSPIRED CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE IS A REAR-PROJECTION SCREEN WITH MULTIPLE DIGITAL ASSETS.

G. NAHLA'S OFFICE: THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE INCLUDES A WORKING GAS FIREPLACE, TERRARIUM AND LIGHT-WELL AT CENTER. PRODUCTION STILL.





STARFLEET ACADEMY

SEASON/EPISODE **SEASON ONE/EPISODE ONE**

SET NAME **U.S.S. ATHENA SHIP**

ENTRANTS **MATTHEW DAVIES (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)**
ANNE MALEE VAN KOEVERDEN (SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR)
JARO DICK (SET DECORATOR)















A. & B. *USS ATHENA BRIDGE. ILLUSTRATIONS BY MIKE STANEK. CREATED IN RHINO AND BLENDER. BRIDGE CONCEPT SHOWING A TIERED RISER WITH CONSOLES, A TIERED CEILING ON CHAIN MOTORS AND A WIDE CAMERA PATH THAT ORBITS THE CENTER CONSOLE STATIONS AND CAPTAIN'S CHAIR.*

C. & D. *USS ATHENA BRIDGE LOOKING INTO THE BRIDGE FROM THE MAIN "VIEW SCREEN" AND IN "RED ALERT" MODE. PRODUCTION STILLS.*

hundreds of years. We figured that in the age of programmable matter, curated character-driven realities might just be possible—so a woodsy Frank Lloyd Wright in space not only made sense, but actually grounded the language of Nahla's office in the terrestrial California landscape visible from her massive picture window.

In the first weeks of the design process, it was just myself, two Set Designers (Alyssia Ma and Nelson Cheng) and my steadfast Supervising Art Director, Anne Malee Van Koeverden, furiously modeling, adjusting and refining until we had something pitch-worthy. As consumed as I was by the task of designing a four-story atrium composite with classrooms, student bleachers, a mess hall and viewing balconies, there was another knot forming in my stomach, the *Athena*'s bridge. I knew that this would be our hardest test with fans of the show. While the spirit of Gene Roddenberry looked on, I pored over designs of past *Star Trek* bridges, looking for themes that made each iconic yet somehow familiar.

The sight-lines always bothered me—why was Uhura always facing away from us? In fact, most of the crew had their faces buried in motion graphics. What if the captain wasn't at the front, but in the middle and we stepped the set so that the captain's crow's nest was actually higher for a 360-degree view of the space? If we separated key crew from their wall-mounted consoles and added a circular walking track around the space, we could achieve long, continuous dollying shots always keeping the captain center-frame and still see the faces of those in her line of sight. In the end, Set Designer Mike Stanek and I designed a geometry of two rounded squares, set at forty-five degrees to one another—four sides, four turbo lifts, with entry from either side of frame. Ceilings have always been core to my design ethos and here we opted for chromed rings in three independent hydraulically controlled sections that stepped down toward the center, effectively inverting the language of the floor. These could be lowered to imbue a sense of claustrophobic intensity and the lighting would pulse like the ripples on a pond. Assuming the forward viewscreen would effectively absorb one of the walls, we had three walls left for huge motion graphic displays, unobstructed by consoles.

The ship itself has always been a major character of any *Star Trek* franchise; and with the help of Concept Designer Lee Fitzgerald, we based her fluted nacelle covers on the mythical wings of our goddess Athena. But on the bridge, we also wanted to feel her immutable pulse—our prolific motion graphics Art Director Tim Peel designed many animations for the back wall of the bridge. Alex and Noga both knew that this would play heavily in frame so chose the rhythm of animation that best suited *Athena*, a slow but steady cardiograph of her beating heart, the warp core...

Shuttles, turbolifts, endless corridors—so much of *Star Trek* has always been about the journey. For a future where people can instantly teleport, it's curious at first that so much is written for these transient moments. And for *Starfleet Academy*, we really tried to redefine those experiences—our turbolifts now have seating for our large ensemble cast, our shuttles resemble drop-ships for our teams of cadets, and the corridors of *Athena* follow an endless curve that mimics the curvature of the hull and alludes to all that is unseen.

Designing the dorms was an exercise in small-space functionality, a Swiss Army knife of a set with unobstructed sight-lines from every bunk, architectural components that can be substituted out and sensual lighting for our hopeful cadets. These spaces are all points of forced intimacy, where on a massive Federation vessel in the furthest reaches of the galaxy, our characters can all interact and reveal themselves.

"A bit of flesh and blood in a universe without end."
–Kirk

In fact, so much of sci-fi is about portraying scale in the confines of a soundstage. In the days of the original *Star Trek*, this was with the use of glass matte paintings and miniatures. When VFX crept into use in the nineties, there became an obvious disconnect between what could be achieved in camera and these stand-

E. *EXTERIOR USS ATHENA CONCEPT ILLUSTRATION BY LEE FITZGERALD.*

F. *USS ATHENA TURBOLIFT PRODUCTION STILL.*

G. *USS ATHENA STUDENT QUARTERS. ILLUSTRATION BY ROY ZANDBOER. CREATED IN BLENDER AND OCTANE.*

H. *USS ATHENA CORRIDOR. ILLUSTRATION BY ROY ZANDBOER.*

I. *USS ATHENA CORRIDOR PRODUCTION STILL.*





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alone shots depicting scale conceived in post. The lesson of *Discovery* was to re-explore what could be done in-camera by creating immersive sets with live reflections on the virtual production wall, a custom-built 2700 panel video wall operated by Pixomondo. By the time I joined the *Star Trek* family, we'd had some huge successes and a couple of disappointing failures, but either way, there was much to be learned and refined. In production terms, it has brought VFX back into the Art Department world. Now all of our digital assets are designed contiguous with the physical set pieces they serve and "blend days" are scheduled so that we can see everything in one place and tailor our lighting to match or hide the margins between what is real and virtual. A live-tracked lensing system working in Unreal Engine extends the "volume" into the "wall" so that our directors and actors can again see and feel their environment. It's been a game-changer, allowing us to conceive and shoot entire sequences with minimal VFX touchup and without resorting to finding fresh and ever-distant locations to shoot. For the final show-stopper of season one, we expanded the reach of the virtual production wall, building out over a 100-foot riser with a practical street set for our Kowloon-inspired salvage planet, Ukeck. For a show on a tight production schedule and short post-turnaround, we have breached the wall of studio-bound bottle episodes and opened our imagination to boldly go twelve hundred years into the future.

"One man cannot summon the future..." **–Spock**

And so, *Star Trek* has become the grandaddy of sci-fi, amassing sixty years and over eight hundred hours of television history. These stories entertain, fascinate and reflect how we see ourselves now and our hopes for a brighter future. And I don't think my four-year-old self, growing up in front of the TV in rural Ontario would have dared to dream that he would one day be a part of that legacy. And the magic lives on—every time I walk our sets or stare into the abyss of the virtual production wall, I'm still blown away by what the human imagination can conjure up. Maybe one man cannot summon the future, but collectively we can boldly go just about anywhere... **ADG**

Matthew Davies,
Production Designer
Anne Malee Van Koeverden,
Supervising Art Director
Matthew S. Morgan,
Hayley Isaacs,
Christine Gonsalves,
Tim Peel,
Art Directors
Matthew Harris,
Mason Robertson,
Michael Chan,
Isobel Rose Binnie,
Danielle Brathwaite-Lynch,
Assistant Art Directors
Alyssia Ma, Nelson Cheng,
Mike Stanek, Roy Zandboer,
Yohwan Kim,
Set Designers
Andy Tsang, Lee Fitzgerald,
Frank Yang,
Concept Artists
Stuart Pearce, Courtney Lee,
Graphic Artists
Jaro Dick,
Set Decorator









E. TOROTH SHUTTLE CONCEPT ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK YANG.

F. UKECK MARKET ILLUSTRATION BY ALYSSIA MA. CREATED IN RHINO AND BLENDER.

G. UKECK MARKET. LIVE REALIZATION OF UKECK ON THE VP WALL WITH PRACTICAL FORE- AND MIDDLE-GROUND ELEMENTS EXTENDING INTO THE DIGITAL ASSET. PRODUCTION STILL.

A. *USS ATHENA*: AIR-LOCK. PRODUCTION STILL.

B. KEIREC'S OFFICE. ILLUSTRATION CREATED BY FRANK YANG IN BLENDER AND PHOTOSHOP FROM A RHINO MODEL BY BEN TRUNBULL.

C. KEIREC'S OFFICE. PRODUCTION STILL.

D. BOTANY LAB. A SET SITUATED WITHIN A ROTATING GRAVITATIONAL O'NEILL CYCLINDER CREATED FOR THE VP WALL. PRODUCTION STILL.





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