2018

Scenic Design for Anton Chekhov's Three Sisters

James Vincent Raymond

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Thesis submitted to
The College of Creative Arts
At West Virginia University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Scenic Design & Technology

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School of Theatre & Dance

Morgantown, West Virginia 2018

Keywords: theatre, scenic design, Three Sisters

ABSTRACT

Scenic Design for Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*

James Vincent Raymond

This thesis document is a written account of my scenic design process. The initial discussions with the director led to the finished set onstage for a production of *Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov. The play was produced by West Virginia University's School of Theatre & Dance, presented in the Gladys G. Davis Theater at the Creative Arts Center in Morgantown, WV. The production dates ran from November 16th-30th and December 1st - 2nd, 2017. This document comprises the scenic design appointment through my analysis of the script, the design process, the execution of the design, and finally my analysis of the assignment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My Parents- Thank you for your tireless care and faith in me. I could not have gotten this far without your support and love. Thank you so much for consistently coming to see my work and travel long distances to make this happen.

Professor Robert Klingelhoefer of WVU- I seriously do not know how I would have gotten through grad school without your guidance and your passion for design. I am extremely grateful to have had you as a mentor and hope we can continue that friendship down the road.

The faculty and staff of West Virginia University- Thank you for tirelessly believing in me and really helping me become successful in my chosen field of endeavor.

Darnell Patrick Morris & Ovations Theatre- You have honestly been a huge inspiration to me. For always believing in me and pushing me to not only be the best I can be in my field, but to continue to stand up for equality and human rights, while getting the youth involved.

Professor Will Neuert of DSU- I have learned so many awesome tricks and theatre magic under your guidance. Thank you so much for believing in me and guiding me through my undergraduate college career. I hope we continue to flourish that friendship as well.

The faculty and staff of DeSales University- Thank you for the amazing support and care that is apparent in your mission, “Be who you are and be it well.”

Laurel Mill Playhouse- Thank you for helping me discover my true passions and letting me grow as an artist and as a person. I feel extremely lucky to have been so much involved in your theatre.

DEDICATION

For my family & friends, Dennis Paul Stull, Josie and Mr. P

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2017, Professor Robert Klingelhoefer, Associate Professor of Scenic Design, presented me with *Three Sisters* as the production selected for my thesis. The play was chosen for me because it presented the challenges of a rich historical period and is a multi-set production, which would be presented in a three-quarter thrust space. The show would be performed in the Gladys Davis Theatre in the Creative Arts Center on the Evansdale campus of WVU. It would be directed by Professor Jerry McGonigle and Sydney Yates (BA ‘18) as the Stage Manager with the production team consisting of Professor Steven Neuenschwander, Production Manager; Abbey Rinaldi, Lighting Designer (BFA ‘18), Laura Kay Plikerd, Costume Designer (MFA ‘19), and Professor Alan McEwen as the Sound Designer. The Technical Director would be Garrett Weigel (BFA ‘18), I would serve as the Scenic Charge Artist with assistance from Scenic Artist Lindsay Maiorano (MFA ‘18), and the Props Master was Professor Klingelhoefer with Christopher Riley (BFA ‘18) as the Props Carpenter.

The scenic designer’s challenge is to create the physical world in which the characters tell their stories. This is done by facilitating the actor’s interaction with the physical space, supporting and extending the ideas in the play, working within the director's vision and concept. The design process includes creating renderings, a model or models, groundplans, sections and drafted elevations that show the design in great detail. The designer also approves or designs set dressings and props to complete the world of the play.

The design process began on April 28th, 2017 with the first read through of the script. Final designs were presented on September 11th, 2017, and the show opened on November 16th, 2017.

CHAPTER 1: MY EXPERIENTIAL PATH

When I was in grade school, I was diagnosed with learning disabilities. This meant of course, I had to learn differently than many students. Upon this diagnosis, my mother immediately signed me up, with the guidance of my repeated first grade teacher, to participate in an educational theatre program, Drama Learning Center. D.L.C. gave me guidance through classes, camps and workshops. In later years with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the necessary accommodations were put in place, which helped me succeed in school. I also discovered, through D.L.C., that I had gifts in areas such as art, which in turn began to help me with my self-esteem, and further improved my ability to learn. This training gave me the ability to engage comfortably with others and to become a leader. Despite how difficult academics can be for me because of my learning differences, I have worked hard and continue to strive to be the best that I can.

Figure 1.1 A Young James

After graduating from Mount Saint Joseph High School in Baltimore, I attended DeSales University where I received a BA in Theatre Technology and Design, with a emphasis in scenic design . Since graduating, I have worked as a freelance scenic designer, which has afforded me many invaluable opportunities to practice my craft and see my designs come to fruition.

I also came to the realization that

In order to develop my design techniques further, I would benefit from studying/working with experienced professionals at the graduate level. The instruction I received and what I learned from my professors during my time at DeSales, gave me the confidence to present my designs. This also gave me the ability to work closely with the director on each specific project to fulfill their requirements and bring the designs to life.

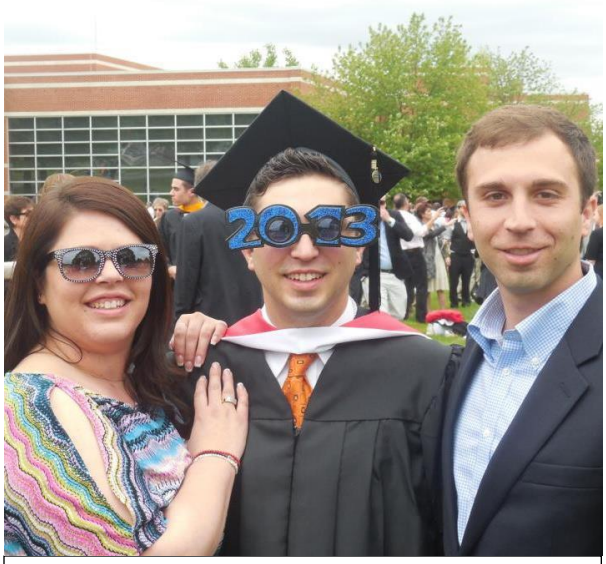

Figure 1.2 DeSales Graduation

Figure 1.3 was my set design for the musical revue *I Love A Piano,* which was performed for the 2012 mainstage season at DeSales. However, this has all been a first step for me. To become one of the top scenic designers in the theatre/entertainment business, I needed to acquire the knowledge and experience that would come from studying for my MFA.

Figure 1.3 *I Love a Piano*

Designing *Three Sisters* gave me many opportunities to grow as an artist. The project taught me a few key elements that have made a huge impact on my design process: how to use new and exciting methods, such as more intense study of the script, the conceptual practice of creating a written statement, finding a designable idea,

to develop design ideas, and to think outside the box. I was faced with many challenges and believe that in working through them I gained the confidence to pursue these challenges head-on and quickly make the necessary changes, without losing steam or getting sidetracked.

CHAPTER 2: THREE SISTERS: BRIEF BACKGROUND

Figure 2.1 Cover of First Edition, Published 1901, by Adolf Marks

Three Sisters, written by the Russian playwright, Anton Chekhov in 1900, is a theatrical work that focuses on three sisters, Olga the oldest, Masha the middle and Irina the youngest, and their brother Andrei. Each of the sibling's grapple with living in a small provincial town, far from the Moscow of their youth, due to their father's military posting. Anton Chekhov, trained as a doctor, took these human observations and used them in his writings to look keenly into human interactions and dreams. In Chekhov's era doctors took information from their patients by observation to diagnose them.

Professor McGonigle would write in his program notes:

> "All of us have dreams, spoken or not. Sometimes we pass them off as "daydreams," or wishes, or desires. How often do we follow through with them? Are we slaves to the Dreams, bolstered by them, or do we file them

> away in a convenient drawer marked “It Would Be Nice”?...Along with the individuals and their dreams, Chekhov shows a web of family and acquaintances that provide clear (though sometimes subtle) support or sabotage for dreams. It's not necessarily a fiction, this happens to almost everybody, and our own lives attest to this bitter-sweet truth.”

Their father died a year before the play begins. The life the sisters once had, full of social gatherings and festivity in the city, has now been reduced to feelings of loss and loneliness in this less aristocratic town surrounded by endless forests of birch trees. Their hopes and desires to live in Moscow again are foremost in their thoughts, because they believe living in Moscow to be the highest form of living. Each of the sisters and their brother, Andrei, have their own separate journey of disillusionment. Masha, for example, is seen in the beginning of the play very moody and discouraged. Through the course of the play, she goes to the heights of ecstasy and depths of despair. She is stuck in the past reminiscing of the days when social gatherings were part of their daily life.

> Masha: … “In the good old days when father was alive, there used to be thirty or forty officers at every birthday party, it was lively and noisy-- it was almost deafening-- but today-- about one and a half guests and still as the grave!”
>
> (Chekhov 5)

She becomes more titled and arrogant after their father's death, which in turn makes her feel the loss of hope and happiness.

Irina, the youngest, gradually starts off metaphorically, as excited as a young bird flying through the air, excited in her feathered finery, innocent and naive, and sure that anything can happen. As the production progresses, the audience sees her become someone who is just exhausted**,** and trudging through life. Her character could be seen as having the longest arc of all.

Olga, being the eldest sister and passing as a more of a supporting role, could be seen as not having a major impact on searching for those dreams and desires.

Chekhov weaves this story of disillusion with a mixture of pathos, humor and melancholy. I was anxious to begin working on it.

SECTION II: THE DESIGN PROCESS

CHAPTER 3: FIRST DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR

Our first production meeting took place on April 28, 2017. The design process begins with the director presenting their vision of the production. The research images I accumulated before the meeting helped me understand the world that these characters lived in.

I always try to keep an open mind to all design possibilities in the early stages.

Figure 3.1 Russian Architecture

Provincial Russia in 1900 has an array of visual interest. The architecture is a mixture of the rustic and the ornate. Figure 3.1 is one example of the ornate details of the architecture. Large country Estates with rambling houses are set amid forests of birch trees, many in a charming state of decay that one imagines to have always been their state.

The beginning of our first meeting, Professor McGonigle was curious about what other members of the production team had to say about the play. He had directed the play several times before and felt you cannot avoid the central theme of hope in the play. You can take the sisters and the brother and connect each of them, act by act, to their progression towards what Moscow represents to them. Suddenly you realize that

each character's journey intersects with this idea of disillusionment and the acceptance of reality for what it is.

Laura, the costume designer, brought up the feeling of melancholy in the play as she saw a wide variety of desolation in the various characters, depending on what they are in encountering. Abby, the lighting designer, noticed that there is a sense of a hopeful, yet absent feeling, because none of the things wished for are ever going to happen.

There is a sense of snobbishness about the sisters. They do not think they belong here in this provincial backwater; however they're not really aristocratic. They are longing for something that the town does not have. Moscow has this idea of liveliness, color and excitement to them. The play can be seen as melancholy with dark humor throughout. This is revealed through the small quirky traits that each character displays. For example, Solyony is seen as a "social misfit and a rather modern type of antihero... He always carries a small perfume bottle which he frequently (almost pathologically) sprinkles his hands and body with; it is later revealed that he does it to mask the smell of corpses on him" ("Three Sisters").

There is a part inside all of us that lives in a state of waiting, waiting for the next thing, the thing that will make us happy. It tells us how glorious life is going to be, but then real life gets in the way. Professor McGonigle put a question on the table: how much does the Moscow they dream of really exist? Moscow has become a metaphor. The sister's unhappiness, loneliness and feelings of loss are focused on Moscow, the city of their childhood. But Moscow has become the proverbial elephant in the room, the thing not present that is a fixation for everyone.

We discussed the physical space and how it relates to the flow of the show. Some of the rooms in which the play takes place seem large, like the sitting room/ dining room of acts one and two. Act three seems small and crowded, and act four, the only exterior, is the largest and most open.

Figure 3.2 The Lilac (Mauve) Study

Some of these interior research images demonstrate the sense of clutter and crowdedness. Figure 3.2 shows the large amount of furniture and interior decorations in a living space. Figure 3.3 implies a clutter room but shows warmth coming through the window, which gives off a sense of welcoming and invitation.

Figure 3.3 Cottage in Khotovo

The house the sisters live in seems quite large. Chekhov does not provide much description but considering the social status of the family, and the number of people who live there, one gets the feeling of a rambling, rather large home, perhaps a little in disrepair, a little rough around the edges.

Research introduced me to the Russian dacha:

> A Dacha is a seasonal or year-round second home, often located in the exurbs of Russian and other post-Soviet cities... The first dachas in Russia began to appear during the 17th century, initially referring to small estates in the country that were given to loyal vassals by the tsar. In archaic Russian, the word *dacha* means *something given*... By the end of the 19th century, the dacha became a favorite summer retreat for the upper and middle classes of Russian society.
>
> ("Dacha")

Act one and act two take place in the drawing room/ dining room of the house, which is a large room or two connecting rooms. In act two there will be thirteen people at the table. In act three we know the sisters are crammed in an upstairs bedroom with two beds, a dressing screen or two and a window. In act four, the only exterior, we wanted to open the space up the most. These birch trees, surrounding this place, are quite beautiful, yet claustrophobic and close together, creating an isolation that indicates a very different type of forest, and very Russian.

Figure 3.4 A Forest of White Birch

Figure 3.5 Architectural Detail

These were the elements I was interested in capturing in this design.

I researched these old Russian country homes and was struck by the loveliness of the decorative wooden cut-outs. The exuberance of the cutwork in figure 3.5 contrasted with the worn wood and decay. These images had the emotional feel of themes in the play, a sense of grandness but very provincial, a charm but also a sadness that is left untouched.

I chose these images not only for their visual and emotional impact but because of their authenticity. Their style is part of this Russian revival movement that arose around 1850. During this time period, traditional Russian styles in architecture came into fashion after many years of the popularity of the French Rococo style. Peter the Great had looked outside Russia for inspiration that would bring Russian Arts up to date. Now, Russians looked to their own country for inspiration and decorated their country homes

with traditional patterns seen on peasant cottages. I wanted to find areas in the design to establish folk Russian patterns by incorporating them into different scenic elements.

This vista of the birch trees, surrounding this dacha, is quite beautiful. Nevertheless, they contribute a feeling of claustrophobia that felt appropriate to the overall characters sense of isolation. These were the things I was interested in capturing in this design. The sense of a wide open space, full of endless forests of birch trees, as soon as we arrive in act four.

CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPING A DESIGNABLE IDEA

My professor uses a term called the designable idea, which helps the artist focus on which ideas to truly spotlight within the play:

> Making choices of what elements to put onstage and deciding what they will communicate to the audience is the core of the designer's work. To make these choices he needs to clearly define for himself the qualities he finds in the play...The term designable idea gives, perhaps, the most room for a range of ideas on which a design could be based. In looking at the themes and the characters in the text, we try to find insights on which to base our decisions.
>
> (Klingelhoefer 87)

Professor Klingelhoefer, Professor McGonigle and I wanted to begin the process of determining how each act would best be laid out in the space by developing groundplans. A groundplan is a drafted bird's eye view looking straight down into the space that shows the exact position of all elements. To begin this process, Professor Klingelhoefer wanted me to make a list of all the necessary furniture pieces in each act. This was important not only because it would help us understand the characters relationship with their world, but because the performance space was a thrust stage. This means that audience members are on three sides of the stage leaving little room for tall scenic elements downstage blocking sightlines.

After I had read the script, I then re-read it and noted all the furniture that was mentioned or noted in the stage directions. I used a method called the *French scene*

breakdown, which helped me see not only how each scene flows, but to understand the interactions of all the characters.

> The term *French scenes* refers to a traditional way to break up a scene as written into smaller, more easily examined and rehearsed moments. Each time a new speech changes the focus of the action, it can be considered a new French scene.
>
> (Klingelhoefer 55)

So once each act was broken down I was able to move forward in designing the layout of the stage. Each groundplan went through a couple of versions and one idea I originally had was to place the dining room table on a jackknife platform. This means that the platform would be on a pivot point which would rotate downstage for Act two. The platform would also be great for the scene shift between acts three and four.

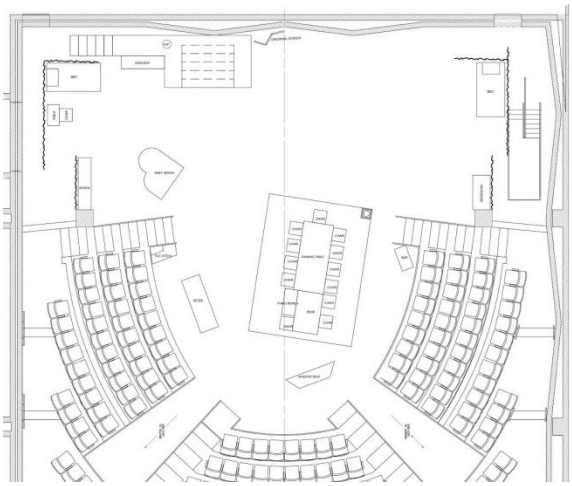

Figure 4.1 Preliminary Groundplan of Act I

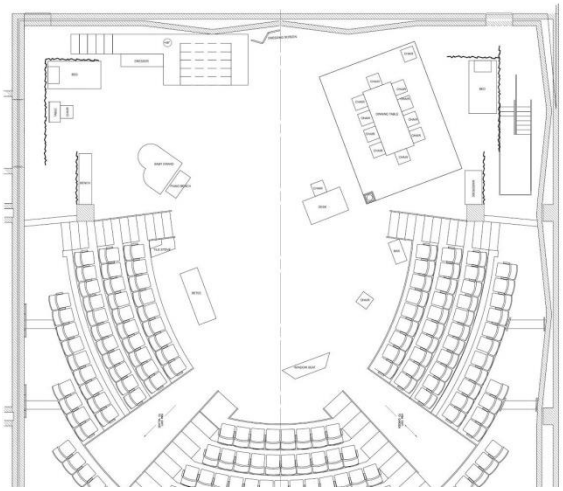

Figure 4.2 Preliminary Groundplan of Act II

I wanted the audience to see the movement of the set as if time was passing by. These ideas also led to the proposal of having the birch trees somehow grow in the space. Originally I thought the scene shifts would be a huge part of the design.

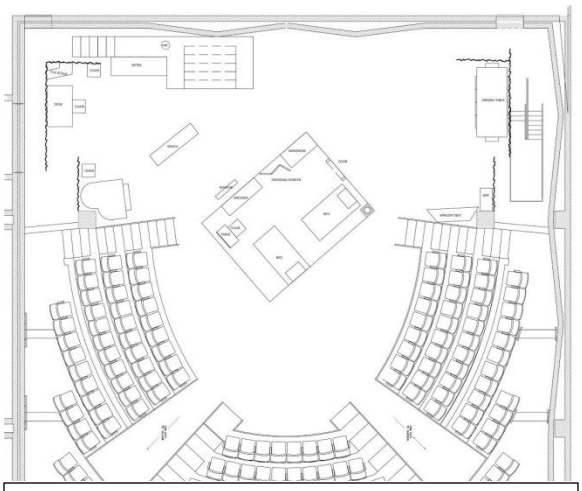

Figure 4.3 Preliminary Groundplan of Act III

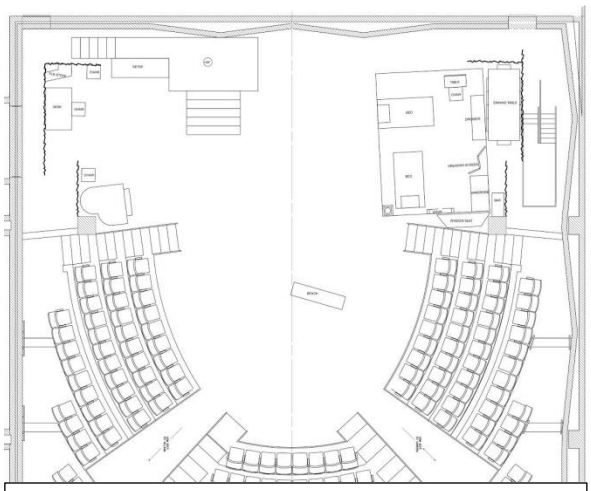

Figure 4.4 Preliminary Groundplan of Act IV

It was important to figure out where everything went so that Professor McGonigle would be able to start figuring out the blocking and traffic patterns of the actors. Professor McGonigle and I kept in touch over the summer break, as I sent him several revised groundplans and some rough sketches. We had multiple phone conversations that would last an hour each talking through not only the physical space but the texture and environment these characters would live in.

Figure 4.5 Birch BWS, by Tina Sheppard

The birch trees kept coming back to me throughout the initial design process. I knew that somehow they were vital to the story but couldn't determine why. It only came to me once I realized that the characters mention the trees several times throughout the play. In Act one Vershinin expresses his attachment to these birch trees. "The forests, the river… and of course, the birch trees...lovely, simply birches, my favorite trees. No, living here is really very pleasant" (Chekhov 10).

Figure 4.5 is my inspiration for the look of the birch trees. The use of the multiple colors that Tina Sheppard incorporated in her work advanced my insight on this key scenic component. This paint treatment emanates layers of depth, which amplifies the beauty that would be coherent in the design. In my design classes we are asked to come up with a statement about the play that can serve as a core idea for the design, which more often than not is character-driven. This written design statement helps to find a designable idea, a world-view of the world-of-the play.

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING THE DESIGN

In the early stages of the design process, Professor McGonigle and I felt the entire theater should feel completely open and spacious. We had this idea that there should be little to no masking leaving the theatre exposed and bare. We even discussed having all the furniture be on stage and stacked up against the upstage wall or on the sides, but we soon realized this could present a message to the audience that the family was moving or selling their home. This was not a message we wanted to portray because if they were doing that, then the whole idea of the struggles that the characters are going through would have been answered. They would easily be able to “pack up” their problems, move to Moscow, and all their troubles would go away.

It was also discussed that by the time we get to act four, we really wanted to open the space and make it feel so much bigger than what it was before. Professor McGonigle and I were on the same page that these characters are all under one roof and everybody knows everybody’s business. People feel like they can’t get away from the tight atmosphere strangling them. Professor McGonigle came up with a great visual that made me think of every summer when my family goes to the beach. We always rent a beach house that forces us to be in the same space for two weeks, which sometimes seems so cramped that we are almost bumping into each other. It’s that idea that people know each other’s every quirk and either they stir up trouble or they try to avoid it altogether. I think that’s the main idea of this piece.

At this point in the process my statement was this:

This world is complex with these characters who are struggling with the idea of living here in the provinces. They are lonely and lost in themselves. They are missing all the

excitement in Moscow, but Moscow is a mental state as much as a real place. They feel crowded and stuck in this clumsy old house in a clumsy small town that is surrounded by clumsy birch trees. This statement allowed me to create my first initial rough sketches of act one and two, which is shown in figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 My First Rough Sketch of Act I & II

This sketch led me to the ideas of the force perspective rough wood floor planks and the clumsy array of birch trees. Act three, shown in figure 5.2 is a very rough look that shows the idea of the windows, minus the floor and furniture. Figure 5.3 was the defining rough sketch of how Professor McGonigle and I really started to see this world come together. The sketch visually helped us find the direction we were aiming for.

Figure 5.2 My First Rough Sketch of Act III

Figure 5.3 My First Rough Sketch of Act IV

As soon as the fall semester began, Professor McGonigle and I met several times in person to really clean up and define the placement of the furniture. We created a rough model for the director to use in rehearsals. He was able to determine the placement of the furniture that would help me develop the final ground plan, which is shown in figure 5.4.

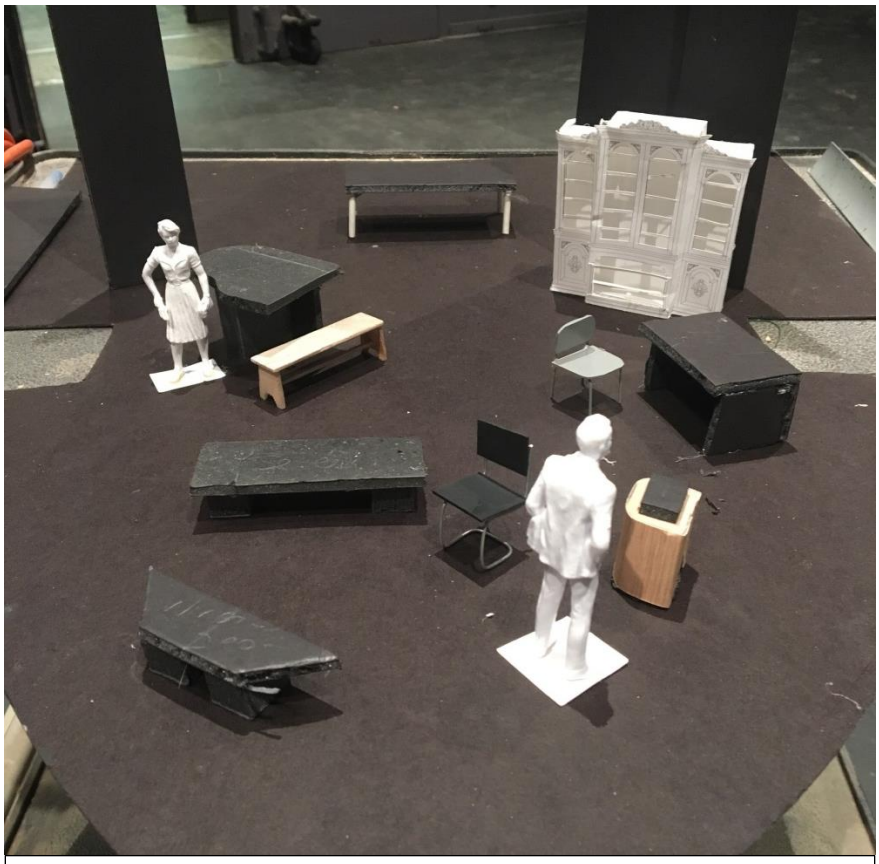

Figure 5.4 Rehearsal Model Mockup

CHAPTER 6: FINAL DESIGN

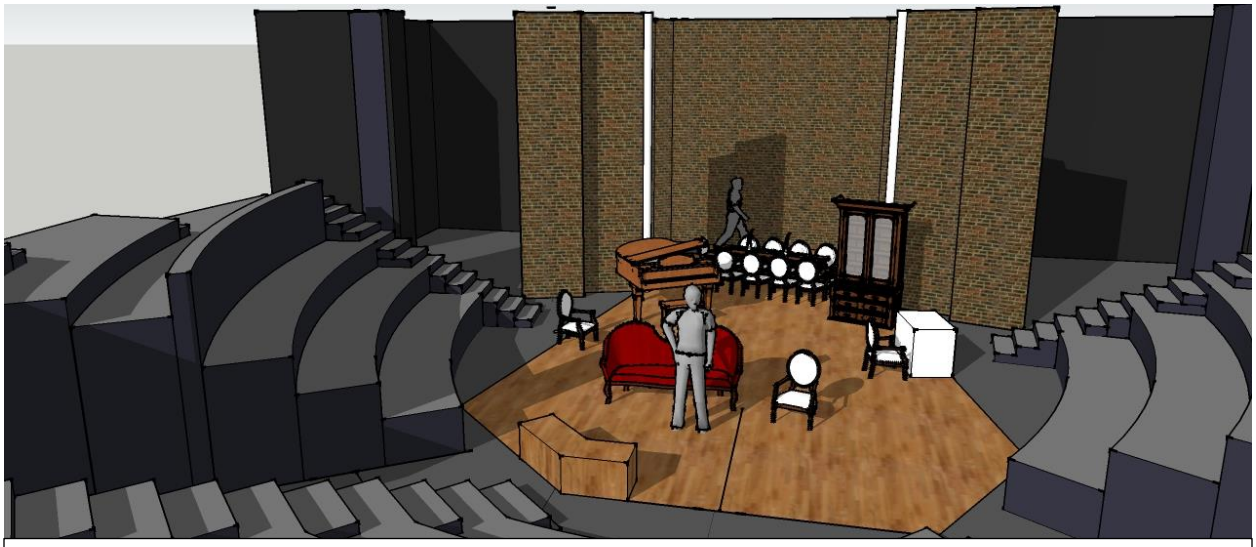

Figure 6.1 My First Rough SketchUp of Act I

The characters in *Three Sisters* are stuck, immobile because of the conflict between reality and aspiration, and I wanted the final design to reflect this theme. They dream of a path to what they want but are mentally road blocked by their inability to take action. I realized that the floor I had designed was like a forced perspective road and at the end there's this huge brick wall blocking their escape. The floor and brick wall represent the family's impeded journey to return to Moscow, creating my designable idea.

Reflecting on this idea of blocked paths led me back to other ideas about openness and closeness. Acts one and two, essentially were the same set. This was a large space as the two rooms were connected. Figure 6.1 is a rough SketchUp rendering of act one and two, which I later refined in Photoshop.

Figure 6.2 Final Photoshop Rendering of Act I

Figure 6.2 is the final design of act one and figure 6.3 is act two.

Figure 6.3 Final Photoshop Rendering of Act II

Act three should seem tight, small, and compressed as the world of the sisters begin to deteriorate more, shown in figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 Final Photoshop Rendering of Act III

Act four would be the largest space but the one in which the visual idea or the road and the barrier wall would be most clear. This is prominent because the furniture goes away and the back wall becomes less unobstructed. All the acts would be punctuated by the vertical birch trees.

Figure 6.5 Final Photoshop Rendering of Act IV

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One such design idea was to have two side walls gradually travel off stage as each Act progressed. The result was as the production progressed the tight atmosphere of the family's world opened to extent of the birch filled forest. In acts one and two, the walls also help divide the space to feel like two separate rooms, the dining room and the living room. The most significant shift occurs between acts three and four, when the walls open completely, creating the outdoor space for the last act. Acts one and two needed contained spaces to deal with the character's feelings of being stuck. In act

four, however, they can mentally escape from that confined space, and the stage reflects that in its openness, presenting the characters with an attractive alternative to the city life of Moscow.

Aside from the feeling of openness, I wanted the final design to juxtapose those ideas of beauty with a sense of rough grittiness. This was accomplished through the use of texture on the brick wall, the roughness of the wood floor planks, and the bark of the birch trees. We contrasted those textures with the ornate, stylized, and polished look of the furniture that adorned the stage. Putting these elegant things in opposition to the surrounding gritty world may seem counterintuitive, but there was a deeper beauty in the interplay between the rough and the refined that helped the audience understand the situations and possibilities presented to each character.

Drafting the designs requires communication between the set designer and the TD, who takes the designed vision to the shop, where it comes to life. It is important to get those drafting prepared so that the budget can be defined and work can be delegated to the shop. The budgeting process took longer than anticipated, which may be attributed to the lack of an ATD and lack of detail label drafting at final design by designer. As scenic designer, it is good to be aware of how crucial the drafting process is to the execution of the final design. The more detailed the drafts can be, the smoother the process will run; the more information the shop has, the greater their understanding of those scenic elements will be. As I headed into the final phases of drafting, it became clear that I still needed more information to help the shop execute the designs. Specifically, I needed notes on the dimensions and functionality of some scenic elements. The picture frame wall unit, for example, needed to be further broken down,

detailing how each picture frame could be built. This required a section view of that piece. Without going through this final phase of drafting, the necessary information might not have been communicated to the TD and the shop.

When it came to presenting my drafts to the TD, it was apparent that my draftings were incomplete. The following week was spent trying to improve the level of notes and sections on the final drafts, so that Garrett and his assistant technical director could understand what I wanted. I played a role in the speed of this process.

SECTION III: DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION

CHAPTER 7: DESIGNS DUE & BUDGETING

Budgeting was one of the key hurdles in realizing the design and presented a significant challenge for this production. Garrett, the Technical Director, had planned to have the production's assistant technical director (ATD) work on one half of the set pieces while he worked on the other half. However, due to the absence of the ATD, the numbers were delayed. As the numbers came together we realized we were triple the budgeted amount. As a result, Garrett and I went through each draft to figure out which materials could be obtained at a cheaper cost. One of the larger expenses were the twenty Birch trees, designed to be life size and on tracks, so they could transition smoothly from act three to act four. Having the trees track downstage would interfere with lighting instruments, and the rigging involved would also be costly. Visually, I did not want the audience to see the actors or the crew pulling the trees. Aesthetically I wanted the trees to float downstage wistfully toward the audience as though they were magically growing through the space. Not only would this cost quite a bit, but the man hours alone would be significant. The amount to set up the trees on track with ropes and pulleys would cost between $1,000- $2,000, which would have too much of an impact on the budget.

As conversations progressed, it became apparent that the tracks for the trees would interfere with too many grid squares for lighting. To accommodate the lighting design of the show, as well as to save money in the budget, we decided to cut two of the large tracks going downstage. We left the tracks upstage because they were less

likely to interfere with lighting. Although I wanted the shifts between each act to be a part of this theatrical experience, I realized that it was better to compromise and focus on the overall look rather than spend our limited resources on relatively short scene transitions. Furthermore, Professor Neuenschwander asked me in the meeting if it was worth my budget to focus on the scene shifts rather than my full design concept. This discussion taught me the necessity of compromise between an artistic vision and practical limitations. This would also be consistent with what Professor Klingelhoefer had taught me, “Sometimes you have to kill your babies.” This philosophy comes from the world of writing and basically means sometimes you have to give up the things you love the most. The things that you might absolutely believe in and think are essential to the design, may in fact be your worst enemy. I struggled with this for a little bit, however, I realized that it was more appropriate to go with his philosophy. In this case, sacrificing the tree tracks allowed me to focus more on the overall production and look of the sets rather than a few seconds of scenic shifts. For example, if I had insisted on the tree tracks, the production might have had to scale back two important practical’s, a chandelier and gas lamp that had to fly in.

The other budgeting challenge was the construction of the birch trees themselves. How far did we want to go to make these trees look realistic in texture, size and shape? What method would be the most effective for building them that would not have the potential to blow our budget? At first, I thought we might make them out of PVC pipes and then layer them with ethafoam, which would help build out the natural shapes, then cover them with strips of muslin. We realized quickly that he muslin covering would not look realistic enough or produce the same rough texture we wanted.

Furthermore, the process would be costly, adding up all the materials; the muslin alone can average $4 to $10 a yard, PVC price range for a variety of different diameters can be from $10 to $42. These materials add up with the multiple birch trees to build.

Through the process of elimination and playing around with the numbers, Professor Neuenschwander suggested we try doing an application using green foam (polystyrene insulation foam boards) attached to 2x2 box steel. Using the steel in replace with the PVC would be beneficial in the overall structure because it would be more rigged and stand up better when handled. By knowing that the crew would have to put the trees in place during the scene shift, using PVC as the structure could lead to snapping while lifting near the audience. The steel structure would prevent this from happening.

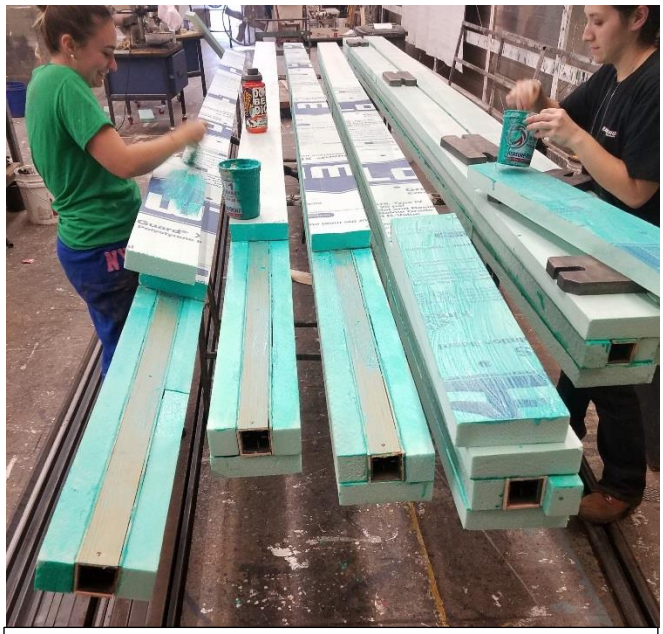


Figure 7.1 Attaching Green Foam to 2x2 Box Steel

This technique would allow me to carve the foam and shape the tree how I wanted it to look and feel.

Figure 7.2, shows me using a corded drill with a wire brush to shape the foam. We would then need to seal it with roof guard to give the foam a thick skin for protection. This was a better solution to achieve the look that I wanted.

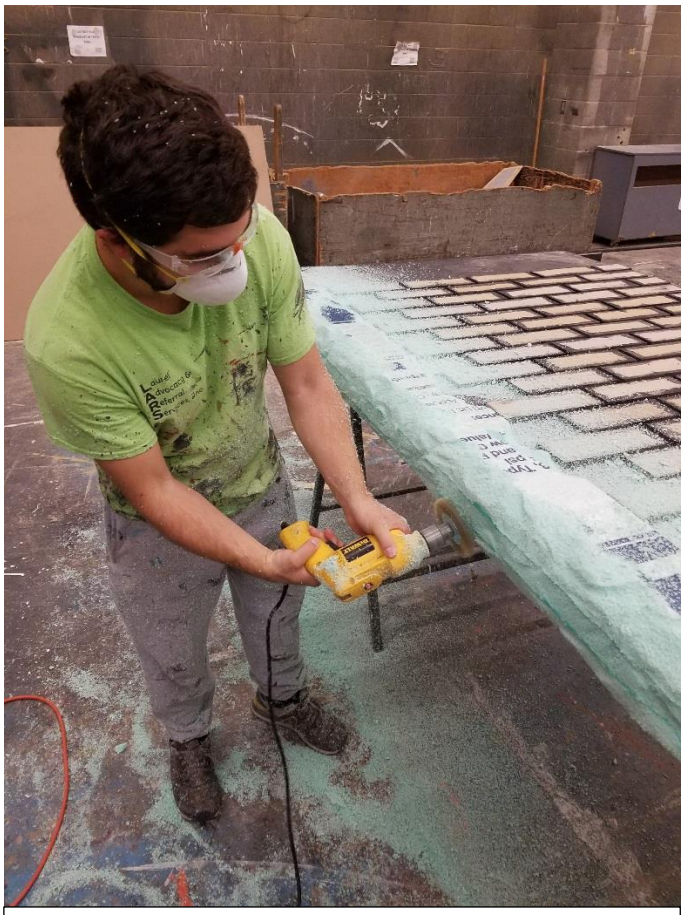


Figure 7.2 Carving the Foam to Become Birch Trees

Once Garrett calculated the cost for this change, we realized we could only make some of the tree out of the box steel (the ones that the crew would put in place) and the trees on tracks upstage could be made out of 2x4 supports instead. This led to the decision of cutting the total number of trees to fifteen instead of twenty. By making this compromise in my design, it allowed the production to come on budget so the show could proceed with build.

Figure 7.3 Final Paint Treatment on Foam Birch Trees

Figure 7.4 Final Paint Treatment

Figure 7.5 Final Paint Treatment for Branches

CHAPTER 8: REHEARSAL HALL

The rehearsal process is an essential part of designing. The orientation of the furniture for act one and two created the pathways instead of the scenic elements that flanked the set in the first two acts. The director, with the actors, will discover moments and spacing that may or may not change once they get the set pieces. Once we were satisfied with the ground plan, it was important to get the actual furniture into the rehearsal space so that the actors could start working right away. Characterization in *Three Sisters* is intricately tied with the set and props, so it was important that the actors had the chance to acclimatize to the furniture. Professor McGonigle wanted the actors to get up on their feet as soon as possible. I met with Sydney Yates, the stage manager, to get the list of needed props and furniture. Although Professor McGonigle and I developed an initial list, I knew that in the rehearsal process some of the furniture would be adapted or changed. I received notice either in the rehearsal reports or by communicating with Sydney directly, I made sure that whatever was needed for rehearsal would be there within a day-or-two.

Sydney informed me as soon as she knew something was either being added or changed. She kept our line of communication open and was easy to get a hold of if I had any questions or concerns. This was Sydney‘s first production as the stage manager, and working with her was a great delight.

While blocking in rehearsal, the director discovered practical limitations of certain set pieces in their original placement. In the original design, the window seat had been placed downstage to give the actors a range of movement. However, this blocked sightlines, so it was replaced with a chaise lounge.

The window seat was downstage right to give the actors an opportunity for an intimate scene that could take place closer to the audience. However, Professor McGonigle realized that the window seat actually closed off the space a little, so in order to prevent that, he decided to cut it and move the chaise lounge instead downstage left next to the stove. He was also having some trouble figuring out the best placement for the stove. We originally designed it to be placed downstage left close to the voms but we realized that it was creating a weird path that would actually close off the entrance to the brother Andrei's room. Vomitoriums are pathways for actors to enter and leave a performing space. We first thought of moving the stove to downstage right but realized it was giving the space an uneven weight balance. To solve this issue, it was moved up stage left, which made the space balanced and gave more options for the actors to play with.

The time in the rehearsal hall was invaluable because we would have never figured out the exact placement of the furniture that would further create these pathways for the actors, especially in the first two acts. The rehearsal period gave Professor McGonigle and me the chance to play with the space more while having the actors involved.

CHAPTER 9: THE SCENE SHOP & PAINT SHOP

With the budget estimate having been reviewed and finalized, we were now able to begin the next step in the process, set construction. Garrett had organized a calendar identifying which set pieces to start with and when they would be turned over to paints. He began with the two stock flats and the flats that needed to be either ripped down or have homasote bricks attached to them. Once these brick flats were completed, Lindsay and I were able to have the lab students paint black. This would take double the time since the edges of the homasote absorbed the paint. As a result, we had to make sure we filled in any “holidays.” “Holidays” is the term used when the painter may or may not intentionally leave some areas of the work unfinished for effect.

Now that the edges were painted, we rolled paint on all the faces of the bricks. The stock flats that needed bricks added to them were already painted black from a previous show I designed *The Trojan Women*. Having the flat already based black saved us time to not paint or wait for it to dry, but also save us money on black paint.

Figure 9.1 Based Black Homasote Bricks with Textured Applied on Top

Once everything was painted black, I added the texture, which was made out of joint compound, sawdust, glue and some black paint to tone down the white. Due to the thickness of the texture, it took a long time to dry. When it finally dried, I had the

students' meticulous paint the texture black. This was tedious but important because we had to make sure none of the white from the joint compound showed through. Once all this was completed, I went back with some rollers which had a textured pattern to them and rolled on the key colors. I used two different reddish brown colors plus a purple paint that would really make the bricks interesting under stage lights.

I had designed the back wall to be made out of a large drop with applied bricks. At first, I assumed using foam for the bricks attached to the drop would make the most sense because of weight and ease of attachment. I also thought that using the drop would be an economical choice since we would not have to buy a new drop and we would not need to construct flats. However, Garrett believed that using the homasote material for the bricks on the drop instead of foam would help tie it in with flats on the sides. Garrett wanted to keep the same material that we used on the flats so that the back wall would have the same quality and texture. Using this material however, made the drop heavy to work with.

Figure 9.2 Lay out of Brick Pattern on Drop

We used liquid nails to attach the homasote and then staples from the back. If I could go back in the process and redo a step, this would definitely be the one.

My first step was to prime the drop white and then layer the bricks right on the drop. ""Prime" is defined as covering a piece of scenery or surface with a paint to prepare the surface before the paint that will be seen is put on. This made the most sense since I

needed to snap lines and make measurements for the brick layout, see Figure 9.2 as a visual. Unfortunately, there were two problems with this approach. However, we discovered that priming the drop white added an unnecessary step. If it had been primed black, the mortal lines would have already been the right color, and we'd only have to paint the edges of the bricks black before attaching them. Since I did not think to do either of these things beforehand, my process was tedious and time consuming. I ended up with mortar lines that were white and the edges of the bricks having no paint on them once attached. I thought at the time having a white background to snap lines would be easier to see when laying out the bricks, and because it was hard to snap the lines and keep them from rubbing off. I tried to measure vertical lines to help follow the pattern and realized this was going to actually confuse me. We had lab students help us snap lines that were slightly inaccurate marks on the drop. This threw off our chalk snapping from being straight. Finally I made a stencil of the pattern of the bricks, which made the process go faster. Once the brick pattern was laid out on the drop we were able to start attaching the bricks.

Figure 9.3 Laying out Homasote Bricks on Drop

We gained speed once the lab students got involved. I had two students put liquid nails on the back of the bricks while I placed them in the appropriate areas on the

Figure 9.4 Applying Texture on Drop

drop. I wanted to leave some areas without bricks to help add depth to the drop. Once that was completed and the liquid nails dried, I was then able to go behind the drop and staple each brick individually. In order to staple each brick individually, I had to roll the drop over. However, as the drop became increasingly larger and heavier, it was harder for me to roll the drop by myself and try to maneuver my way to each brick. Despite the difficulty, I was still able to staple every brick and we were able to begin adding texture on top.

Figure 9.4 shows the drop with applied texture on top. Figure 9.5 shows the drop based black and Lindsay, scenic artist, and I apply the final layers of paint treatment on the bricks.

I had planned for the floor to have a rough texture added to it. Originally it was going to be made out

Figure 9.5 Final Paint Application

of luan or MDF strips to create the forced-perspective of the wood planks. A ⅜” inch gap would be placed in between each plank, with an applied texture. I wanted this texture to be tactile not only visual. When budgeting indicated that we needed to cut something to save money we decided it was the wiser route to just paint the wood planks on the deck instead. This was a smart decision not only because of the budget, but the fact that we had so many furniture pieces that had to be taken on and off that it would have created a nightmare.

Figure 9.6 Paint Elevation of Stage Deck

The process of painting the floor took two days, Saturday and Sunday. First I had the lab students help base the whole stage black to paint over the previous show. Then we marked out the floor layout, and then proceeded to base that area.

Figure 9.7 Floor Layout Based

With the paint budget being tight, however, I knew I could use a lot of stock paint to create the colors that I needed for the treatment on the floor. This was easily done by taking what was already on the shelves and mixing the colors to achieve the right tones.

I also knew that the floor needed to be painted with a clear sealer to protect the paint job from wear and tear, especially in a show with so much furniture movement. Figure 9.8 demonstrates the first layer of color painted on the deck. The snapped lines on the floor helped keep my paint strokes straight.

Figure 9.8 First Layer of Base Paint for Wood Planks

Figure 9.9 shows the four main base colors layered out and based to look like wood planks. This treatment is done by putting a brush attached to the end of a bamboo stick, while standing up and dragging the paint brush across the floor. This helps so that you will not hurt your back bending down or your knees kneeling on the floor. I also did

every other strip for easy maneuvering on the deck so that once those areas dried, I would be able to start on the new ones

Figure 9.9 Multiple Sections Painted on Deck

Once all the base coats are applied to the deck, I took a scrap piece of 2x4 that was roughly four inches long, dipped it in paint on one face, and dragged it on the floor. This process led me to the rough texture on top. This idea came from Lindsay Maiorano who gave me this idea.

Figure 9.10 shows this final step completed.

Figure 9.10 Final Paint Treatment

Finally, figure 9.11 shows the full stage at its completion.

Figure 9.11 Overall Look

At this point it was time for load-in and a few scenic elements had not been completed.

CHAPTER 10: LOAD-IN

Figure 10.1 Backdrop and Side Tracking Brick Flats

The load-in of any show is a stressful phase when all that has been done to this point must come together in the theatre. There are possible problems that will be discovered and happy surprises that will present themselves, once you can finally see the three-dimensional scenery form the audience's perspective.

It was essential that the drop was loaded-in first because of its placement, size, and it needed to be laid down before it could be moved into position. I was in charge of leading my crew, the lab students, to bring the drop from the shop into the Davis. Thankfully the theatre is connected to the shop because this drop was not only heavy but awkward and needed lots of hands to relocate. I had about five people that would help lower the drop which was attached to the paint frame into the lower scene shop so that it could be rolled up. Once it was in the theatre we were able to attach it to the pipe that was lowered from the grid, and start lifting the pipe back up. This took a while since

the drop was very heavy and it is eighteen feet to the grid. With that complete, Garrett and his crew brought in the two side brick flats and started placing them in position. Once they had one flat up, I came in to see how it was coming together.

I realized they had accidentally rigged the flat upside down. This would not have been an issue except the bricks on the edge are cut in half and with the flats upside down making the other bricks align became difficult. At that point it was too late to take it down and flip it around, so Professor Neuenschwander suggested that once everything was loaded in they could take off some of the bricks that were not lining up properly with the other flat off and re-adjust them so they would line up nicely.

What really did help make load-in a pretty decent and smooth transition was Garrett being able to rig the tracks ahead of time. This saved us many man hours so that once set units were completed they were able to come right into the space.

The set unit that needed the most attention to detail and time to finish was the bridge. The bridge needed to feel as if it was part of the woods, yet it needed to have a theatrical sense as well. It was important to me for the bridge to have a very rustic textured, organic look. The bridge was designed to be built out of steel, do the organic nature of the railings. Figure 10.2 shows the skeleton of the bridge.

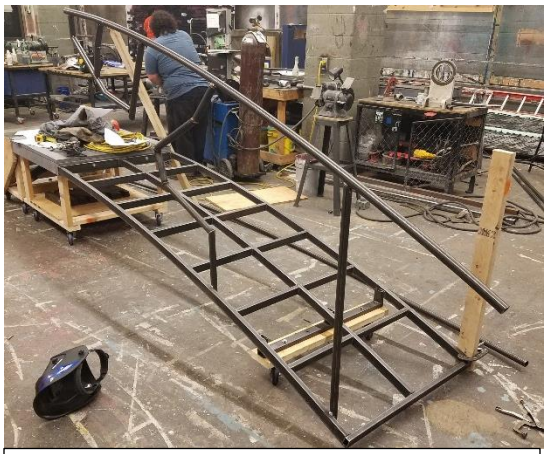


Figure 10.2 Steel Construction of Bridge

Once these branches were built, Lindsay and I were able to dress the pipes in ethafoam (a low density polyethylene, flexible material that comes in sheets and rods, for example, pool noodles) by wrapping it around and taping

it in place; we then layered the ethafoam with the texture I created from Roofguard. The texture is a combination of sawdust, roof guard and paint. I thought adding the paint into the texture would save time by combining the steps of texturing and basing. Once this was complete, it had to dry for twenty-four hours, but we were able to work on other parts of the bridge in the meantime.

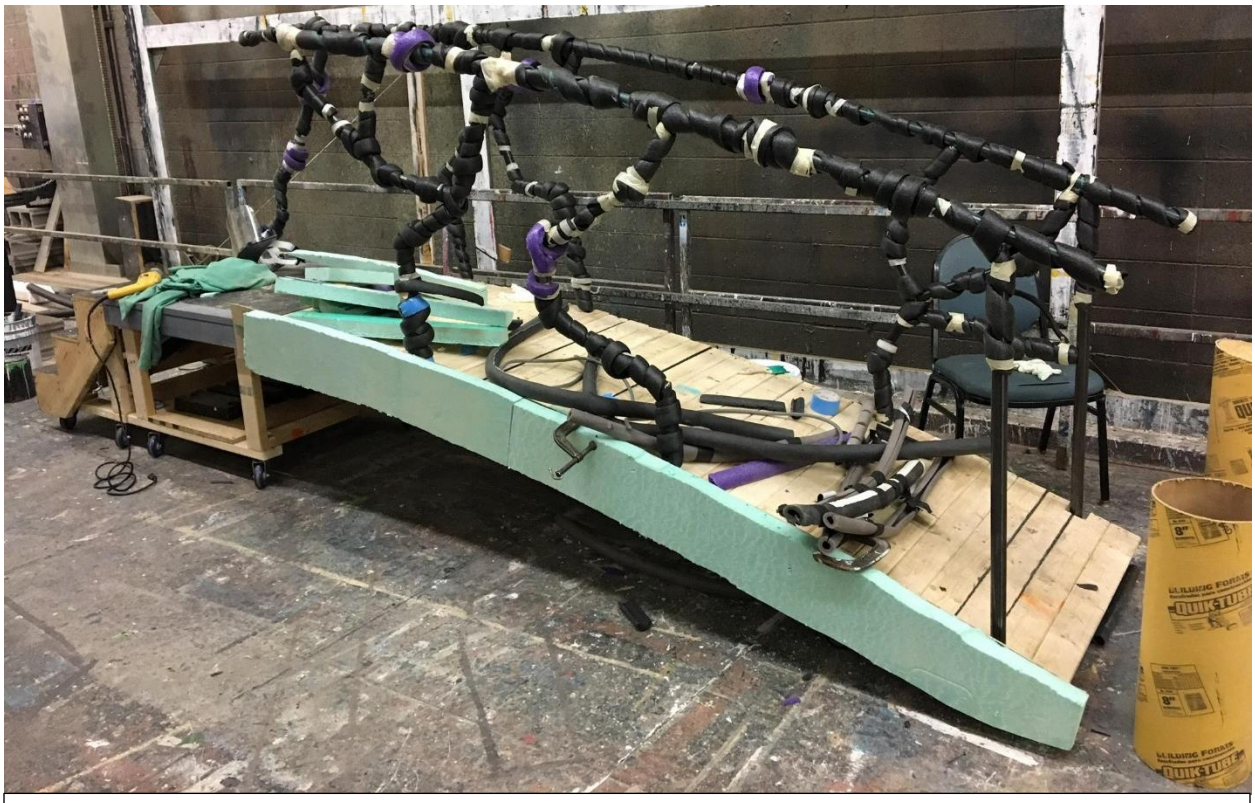


Figure 10.3 Foam Dressed on Top of Steel

After they dried, I was able to proceed with layers of different paints that accented highlights and shadows of the bark. The planks of the bridge were made out of 2 x 4‘s that were laid together side-by-side. This made it easier to put a wash on top and a dry brush to give it a dark brown and black look. The front side of the bridge needed to look like stone so we took green foam and carved it to create a rustic look, adding texture again with Roofguard and sand.

Once the branches and roots were dry from the texture, we went back in and did layers of darker colors and a medium tone producing the final paint treatment shown in figure 10.4.

Figure 10.4 Texture and Paint Treatment on Steel Railings

In my research and sketches, the roots and branches felt like they were growing from tree stumps on each side of the bridge. These were built by taking Sonotube and topping it with cut-out plywood circles.

Figure 10.5 Beginning Process of Sonotube Tree Stumps

I covered the Sonotube in layers of brown paper, almost like papier-mâché, to give it the appearance of tree bark. Figure 10.5 is a zoomed in view of the finished look of the tree stumps.

Figure 10.6 Final Look of Tree Stumps

Finally, figure 10.7 shows the final step with dressing the bridge with foliage.

Figure 10.7 Bridge Dressed with Foliage

Another large set unit in act four was the exterior porch of the family's dacha. Figure 10.8 shows the detail of the porch post and a half roof piece. The platform with the detail, the railing and the stairs were built during the load in process. Figure 10.9 shows the building process of the lower half, with the railing having been cut out and ready to attach. Caila Shields, who is the Scene Shop Manager at WVU, worked tirelessly using the jigsaw to cut out the railing. She played a huge role in handling all of the "frou-frou" in the scenic elements with the jigsaw. Figure 10.10 shows the bottom half of the porch assembled.

Figure 10.8 Paint Elevation of Porch

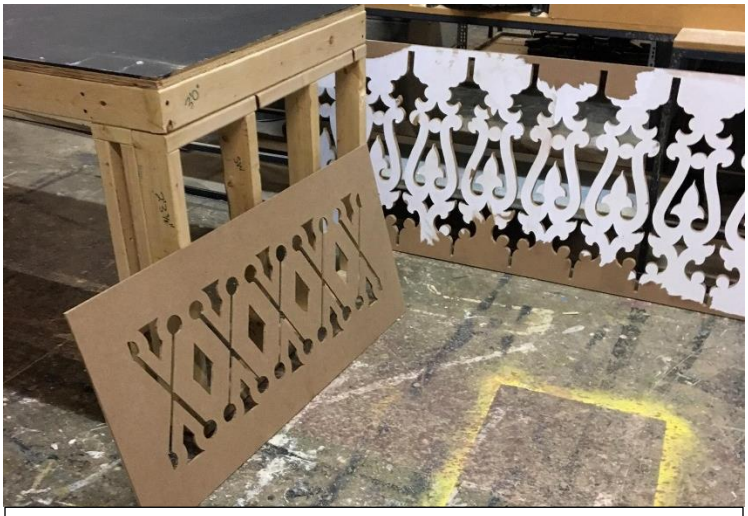


Figure 10.9 Beginning Construction of Porch Platform

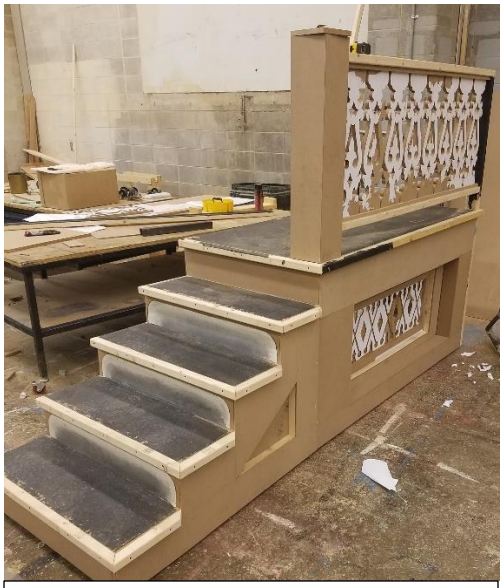


Figure 10.10 Porch Platform Assembled

Figure 10.11 shows the painting process of the porch.

Figure 10.11 Paint Process of Porch Platform

Because of time constraint with the loading-in process, the porch post and half roof piece would need to be built later in the tech process.

There were two practical light fixtures that also needed some man hours to rig and troubleshoot up in the grid. Each practical was for a specific act. The first two acts had a chandelier that was designed to fly out of the space into one of the grid squares for a smooth transition during intermission. However the placement of the chandelier was going to create some issues because of the way the grid is laid out, because the middle grid squares are a cat walk. This meant that the chandelier could not fly completely out of the space, so it would have to be either hung, manually removed or it would be there the whole show. It didn't make any sense to have a chandelier in for all four acts so the only way it would work is to have the crew remove it. It had been discussed earlier that the maid could lower the chandelier to light it and then raise it back up. This idea of rigging it to raise and lower, led us to decide that it could be lowered and removed from the line by the crew instead.

In an ideal world, it's great to have all the set pieces and everything done when tech begins. Unfortunately this does not always happen. There were some key scenic elements that still needed to be completed and/or painted before they were brought into the space. For example, the picture frame walls still had some picture frames that needed to be built and painted and some of the windows attached. The Plexiglas needed to be attached last because we were adding a texture on top of it to create a frosted look so that when they were back lit, they would glow. This look was created with a clear gel product that was sponged on and gave a really beautiful finish.

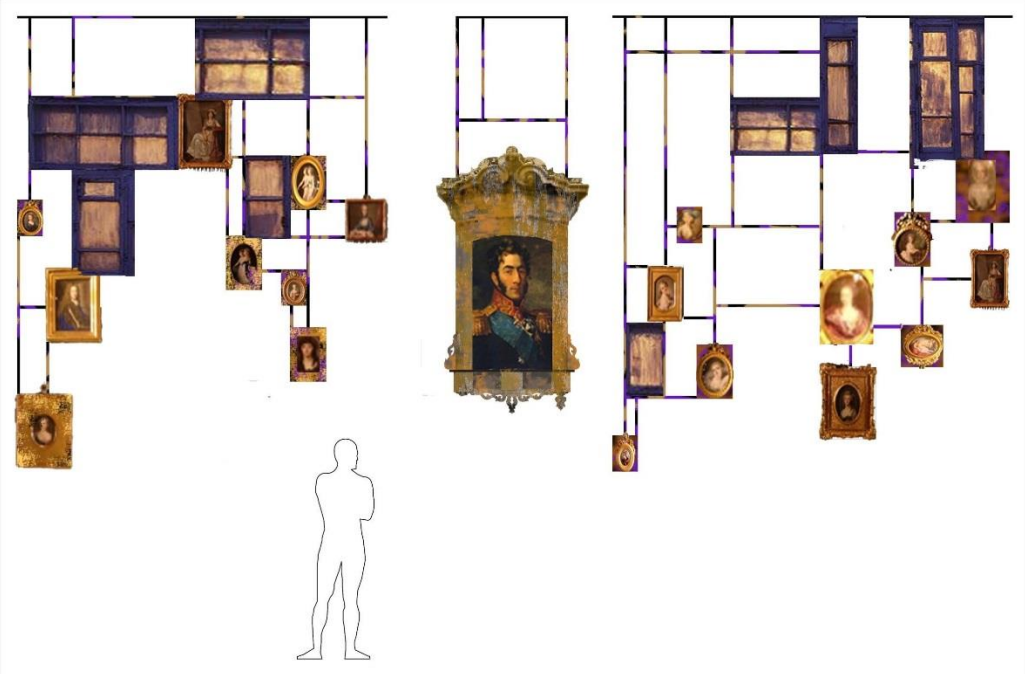


Figure 10.12 Photoshop Rendering of Picture Frame Walls

In act three there is a fire in town and we wanted to create a lighting effect of distant flames in the windows. A few of the picture frames needed to operate like shutters to reveal more windows for this look. I did not really give myself a chance to sit down with Professor McGonigle and discuss what we were actually going to do with each picture frame. This work on the unit and selection of the actual pictures pushed its completion to later then desirable.

I eventually met with Professor McGonigle to discuss that the pictures themselves did not necessarily need to be in a specific order or location. What was more important was that they needed to be a bit blurry in order to avoid drawing too much attention or take away from the scene.

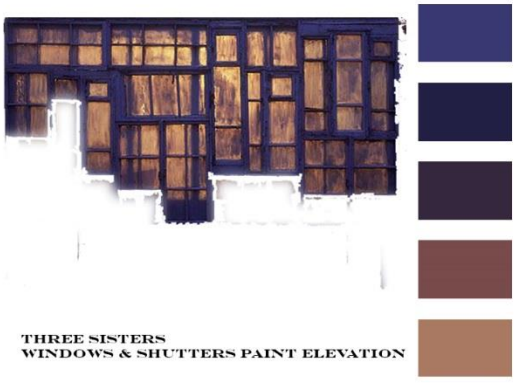


Figure 10.13 Paint Elevation of Windows & Shutters

I cannot thank Professor Klingelhoefer enough for stepping in and lending a helping hand by doing the research and finding pictures that would work.

Once the pictures and shutters were attached, the crew was able to practice the opening and closing the shutters in the transitions. The transition between act three and act four needed to be quick, so the crew had to close the shutters quickly, so that the unit could easily track off stage for a smooth transition.

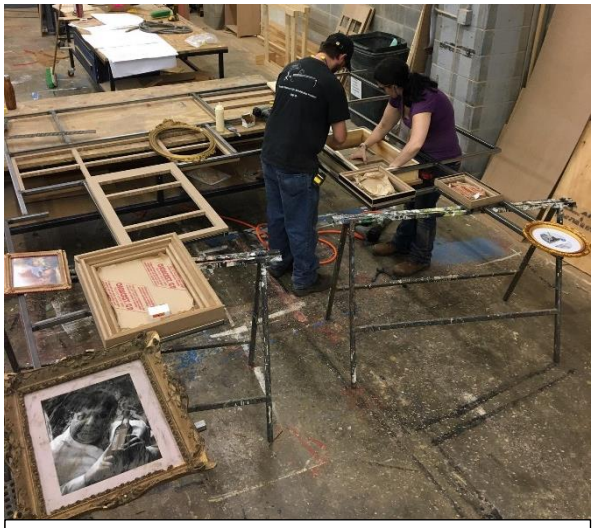


Figure 10.14 Construction of Windows and Picture Frames Applied

At one point, there was another major concern that had to do with some of the picture and windows hanging low on the side for the first two acts. Professor McGonigle thought that the actors would bump into them. This really only happened twice during tech when Professor McGonigle accidentally walked into them. I had a sidebar conversation with Professor Neuenschwander and Garrett about whether we should take the lower picture frames off by cutting the steel. Professor Neuenschwander suggested that I wait until the actors get familiar with those pieces being there instead of redesigning what I had already envisioned and what had been in place since day one. Additionally, we also tried moving the picture frames more off-stage for act one and act two to open up the upstage space because

Figure 10.15 Window Frame Paint Treatment

they were going to come together all the way for act three. This was a simple solution that avoided someone getting seriously hurt.

Figure 10.16 Backstage View of Picture Frames

CHAPTER 11: TECHNICAL REHEARSAL PROCESS

Technical rehearsals depend upon the sets being adequately developed. Actors need the set pieces to be there so that the physical flow of the show can be practiced and honed during these rehearsals. As set designer, it is important for me to contribute to how things are being worked into the show. If there are any questions from the director about how sets have been developed or used, tech rehearsals will be an opportunity to address them together. For example, I originally designed the brick walls to move between each act, while the director thought they would be fixed between acts one and two because the location doesn't change. This conversation made me rethink my concept of how the space would gradually widen by act four. I realized that it made more sense to leave the walls. These are the sort of issues that arise during tech rehearsals, and having run throughs with the production manager and the director is an integral part of this process.

As we stumble our way through the show during these rehearsals, it is important for each shop to make notes, and I participated in this as well. I noted elements that needed adjustments or touch-ups. Something as minor as a few edges might need to be joint compound to smooth over blemishes and seams, or a paint treatment or texture may need to be added to

Figure 11.1 Company Members Working Through a Tech

make the sets effective. I made notes for the technical director of things that fell within their purview that needed attention.

One of my main tasks during this phase was to coordinate with lighting and sound knowing that the space would be dark and need to be quite, so that notes can be done. We would discuss schedule so everyone knew when these notes would be worked on in the space the following day. Each day you are accomplishing some tasks and adding more to the list of things that need to be done. As the set designer, I needed to prioritize and set the schedule of work for my team. At this point in the process, several different teams are trying to work in the space, and I had to prioritize which major items needed to be addressed first so that when we had access, we could accomplish our work.

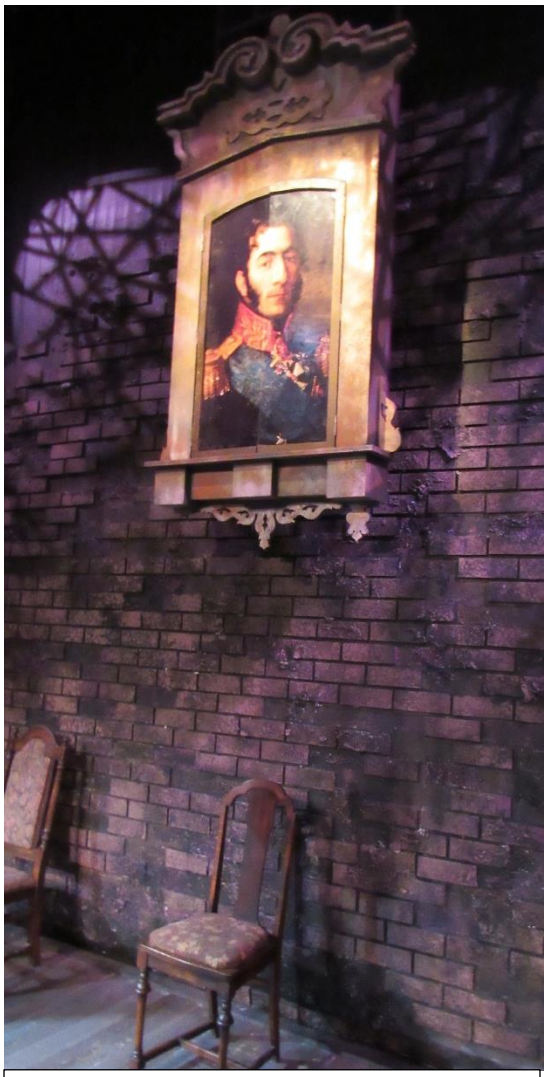


Figure 11.2 Main Picture Frame

Production meetings occurred after each tech rehearsal, and these were a good chance for us to sum up where we were as teams and as a whole production. We exchanged notes, with the director addressing his major concerns first then others contributing their notes. One of my goals for the design was to create set pieces that incorporated dual functions so that they could be used to create different looks in different acts. For example, the picture frame and wall unit used in acts one and two, have

pictures that in act three open up to serve as windows. The brick walls with birch trees attached to their sides also serve as pillars for act one and act two (separating the living room from the dining room). The main portrait of the father (figure 11.2) also was used for two purposes.

It was a portrait for act one and two, but also becomes a window on the exterior of the house. The portrait is attached to window shutters, so that when opened, it reveals the window for act four (figures 11.3 & 11.4).

Figure 11.3 Paint Elevation of Act IV Exterior Window

Figure 11.4 Act IV Exterior Window

One of the dual purposed stage pieces was a kitchen cabinet/wardrobe combination for use in acts two and three. As rehearsals progressed, we noticed that the unit itself, which was intended to separate the living room from the dining room, had sight line problems, blocking audiences on stage left from seeing much of the dining room. Although we wanted the dining room to feel separated and closed off, we did not want to eliminate that much of audience's view. We toyed with several different solutions to the problem by adjusting the placement of the cabinet. But none of the placements were satisfactory; it just was not working the way we wanted it to. We decided that a different unit was needed. One possible solution was a credenza that was already in stock. Upon closer examination,

the credenza did not fit the size and style that we needed and was not in good enough condition to be used. It also lacked the weight/size to balance out on stage, which had a baby grand on the other side. I ultimately solved the problem by creating an entirely new piece from scrap already on hand.

Figure 11.5 The new credenza built out of scrap

This enabled us to maintain the balance and establish the feel and sightlines we wanted. In the end, the cabinet was a fun project that paid off because it helped make the overall set design more effective for the team and the audience. In the end, it was more work, but the production was better off for it because it was essential to the design.

As the shops were narrowing their to-do lists and opening night approached, the largest remaining item that needed to be addressed was the porch post and cut out ceiling piece. Because of time constraints, this essential architectural detail had to be put aside because other things took priority. The final dress rehearsal before previews, Professor Neuenschwander addressed his concern about this piece with the team.

Figure 11.6 Final Look of Porch Post

He asked if it needed to be cut or if a compromise could be struck to fit within the time constraints and the show. He wanted to be sure that we weren't adding something new right before the show went before an audience, which could create issues for the actors. I believed it was an essential scenic element and expressed that I was willing to compromise on the detail in order to keep the piece within the design. This was ultimately what we decided to do: rather than make a full three-dimensional porch post, we settled on a two inch foam cutout that would have some depth and then be painted to provide further depth.

This meant that audience members at any angle would get the impression of depth. The compromise worked because it still enacted my design while enabling all parties to be satisfied that the piece could be built and incorporated into the production in time. Professor Neuenschwander's input into this process was invaluable because he helped

all sides, from lighting, to scenic, to the director, weigh their concerns and options before reaching a conclusion that satisfied everyone and served the production. His role helped me to realize how decisions often can have a chain reaction that affect the other departments, so as set designer I need to consider these things as I adjust my designs.

During this collaborative process, our teams slowly worked toward our final goal of a finished, polished production that was ready to run for an audience. Although the tech rehearsal process had some challenges, those things showed us how taking an extra step paid dividends and resulted in a show that represented the vision of all parties involved.

SECTION IV: REFLECTION
CHAPTER 12: LOOKING BACK

My collaboration with the scenic artist, Lindsay Mariano, was indispensable in my design process. She made a great effort to make sure the set was exactly how I wanted it to feel. Her dedication and motivation was extremely helpful in getting me through the hurdles and challenges of the process. I could not have done this show without her. Her brilliant eye for detail and incredible painting skills were a huge benefit particularly when there were multiple jobs to be completed. This gave me complete confidence that things were being handled exactly as I would want them, even when I couldn't be fully engaged. Lindsay is just one of the many who made valuable contributions to make the design and show possible. I appreciate the contributions of everyone who worked on the production. In particular, working closely with Professor McGonigle was a treat because the process was invaluable. Watching him work through the process and developing the design with him illustrated the dedication, commitment and care that I hope to practice in my future work. He was easy to work with and talk to, and I am grateful for that.

There were a variety of obstacles that we had to overcome, which made this a strong design for my thesis. The show went to four different locations and working with a thrust space has additional challenges. The scene shifts alone had their own issues, including how to polish them and operate as smooth as possible. I wanted to orchestrate those issues so that they could be incorporated into the whole design and the flow of the show. The author and the time period itself were both new experiences for me. Knowing that the length of the piece can be a drawback, I had to consider how

to visually make each act different and exciting for the span of time the audience had to sit.

As always, there are many ways to go about designing a show. In this particular case, I wanted to focus on what set pieces were absolutely necessary to visually play into the production. These are the bare-bones of what drives this play. All the frilly detail in the architecture, the sculpture carved wooden trim can get job heavy and ornate, but sometimes you have to look at the essential detail, move on and forget the rest. I recalled Professor Klingelhoefer's advice that "sometimes you have to kill your babies." Basically sometimes it's necessary to cut the things you may absolutely love for the good of the overall piece. Those layers of detail can be great for a variety of shows, however for this one in particular; you can easily get caught up in those details. As soon as I streamlined my vision, the concept became clearer and straighter and more to the point of what the essential theme really was.

This production is one of my strongest in overall design and concept. The director's vision had not obscured the designable idea. Professor McGonigle and I took the time to really develop the world that these characters live in. I believe that despite having an imperfect design process, the overall experience resulted in a fantastic design. The weakest link for me as a person and as an artist was trying to further develop my organizational skills and improve my ability to communicate more often throughout the process. Being able to express one's needs or ideas is invaluable to any production. In previous work I struggled with communication for example, in previous shows I may have had a rendering prepared but very rough and not completed. Because it wasn't fully realized, I may have had a tendency to hold off on showing it to

others because I felt it was incomplete. From the director's perspective, this could be frustrating because my lack of communication about my process could potentially delay others' work. I realize now that it may be more helpful to communicate incrementally with the director so that he or she can see the process and provide input as my ideas develop. These rough renderings are enough for them to collaborate with me on, which was something I realized that in my position of leadership on this show. As I graduate from this program, I understand that my role is to work seamlessly with the director and incorporate our shared vision. The best approach to leading a design is to be an open and honest collaborator and communicator with those above and below me in the chain of command. This leads to an exciting exchange of ideas and fosters dynamic and creative teamwork.

APPENDIX A: PHOTOSHOP RENDERINGS

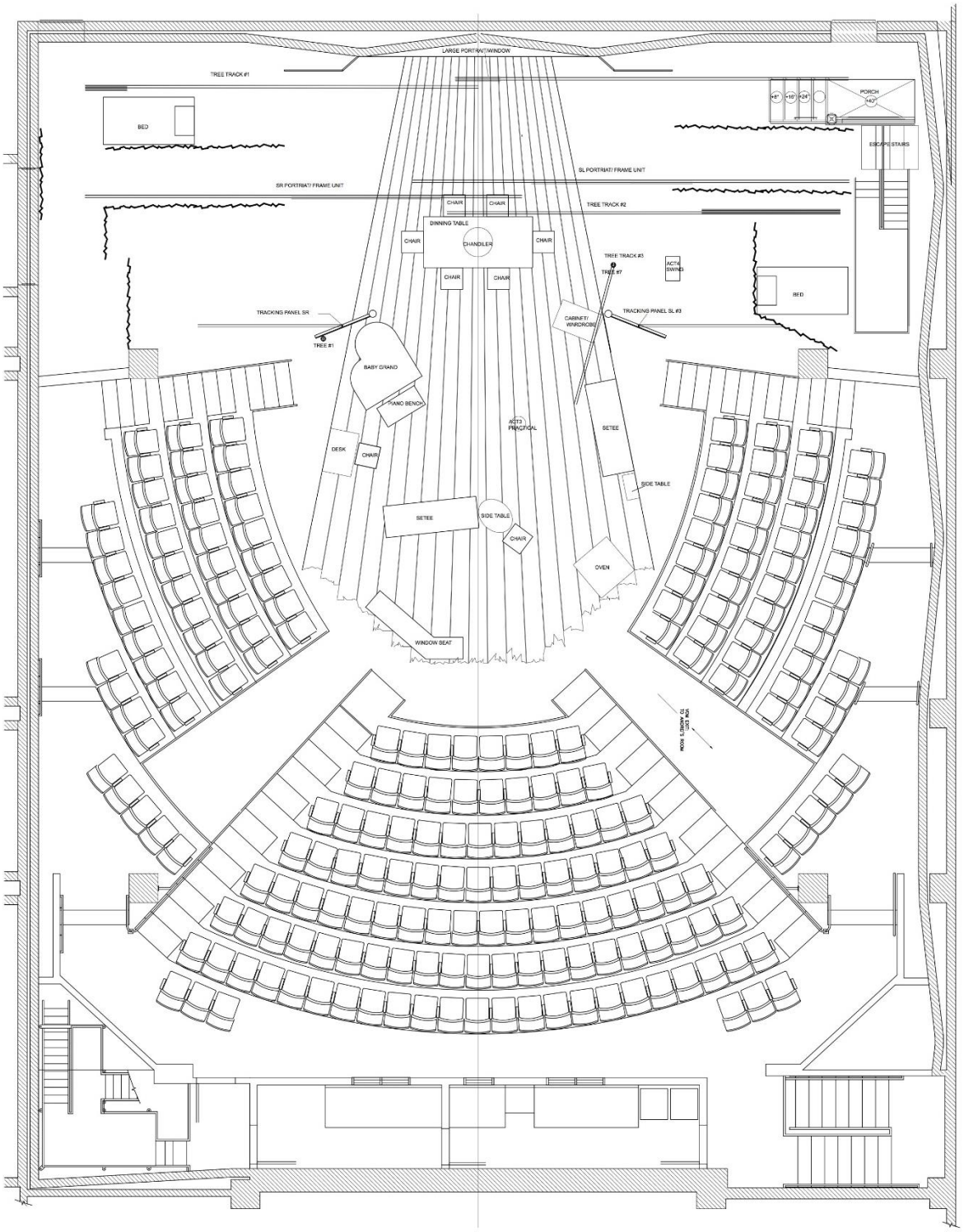
Final Photoshop Rendering of Act I

Final Photoshop Rendering of Act II

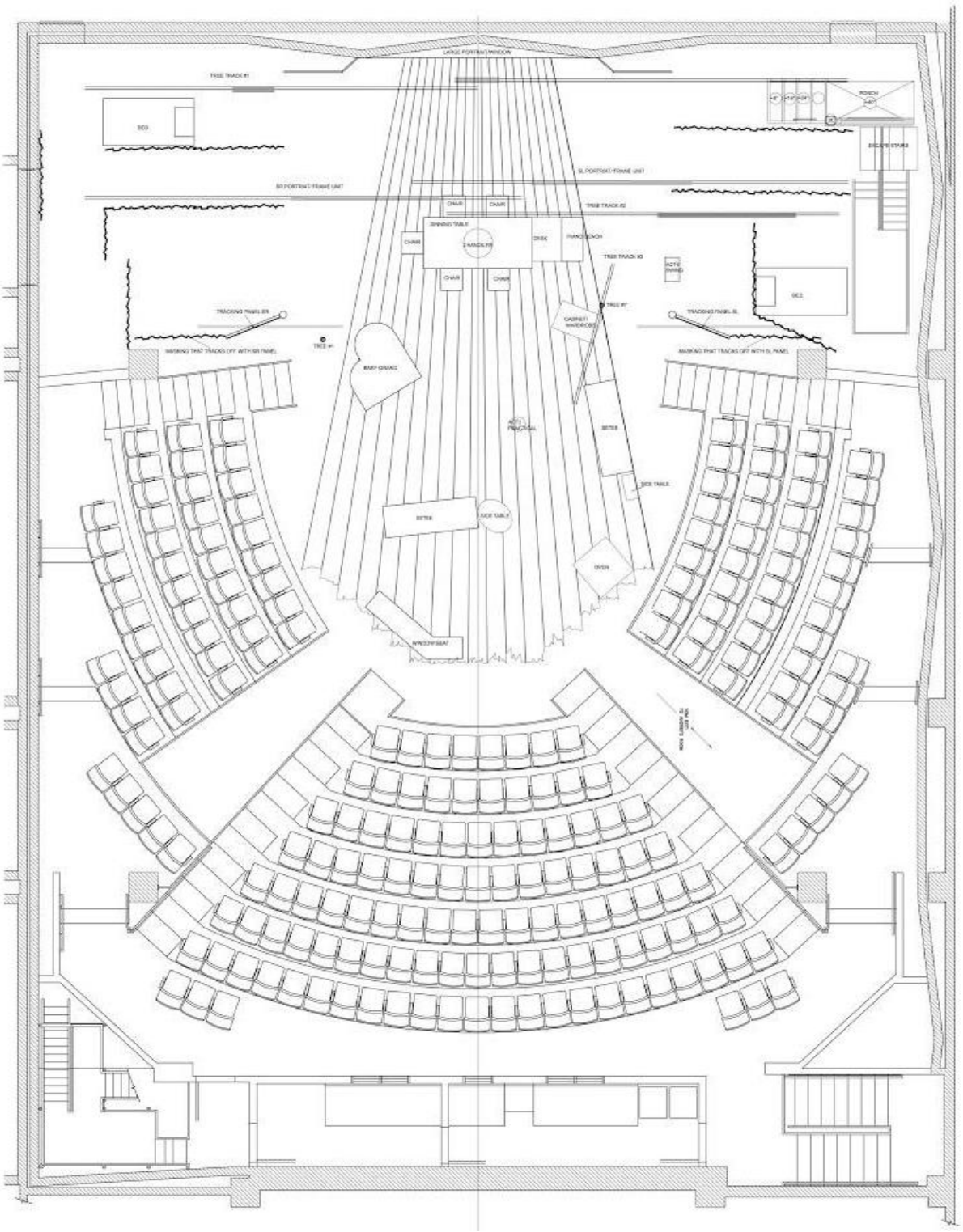
Final Photoshop Rendering of Act III

Final Photoshop Rendering of Act IV

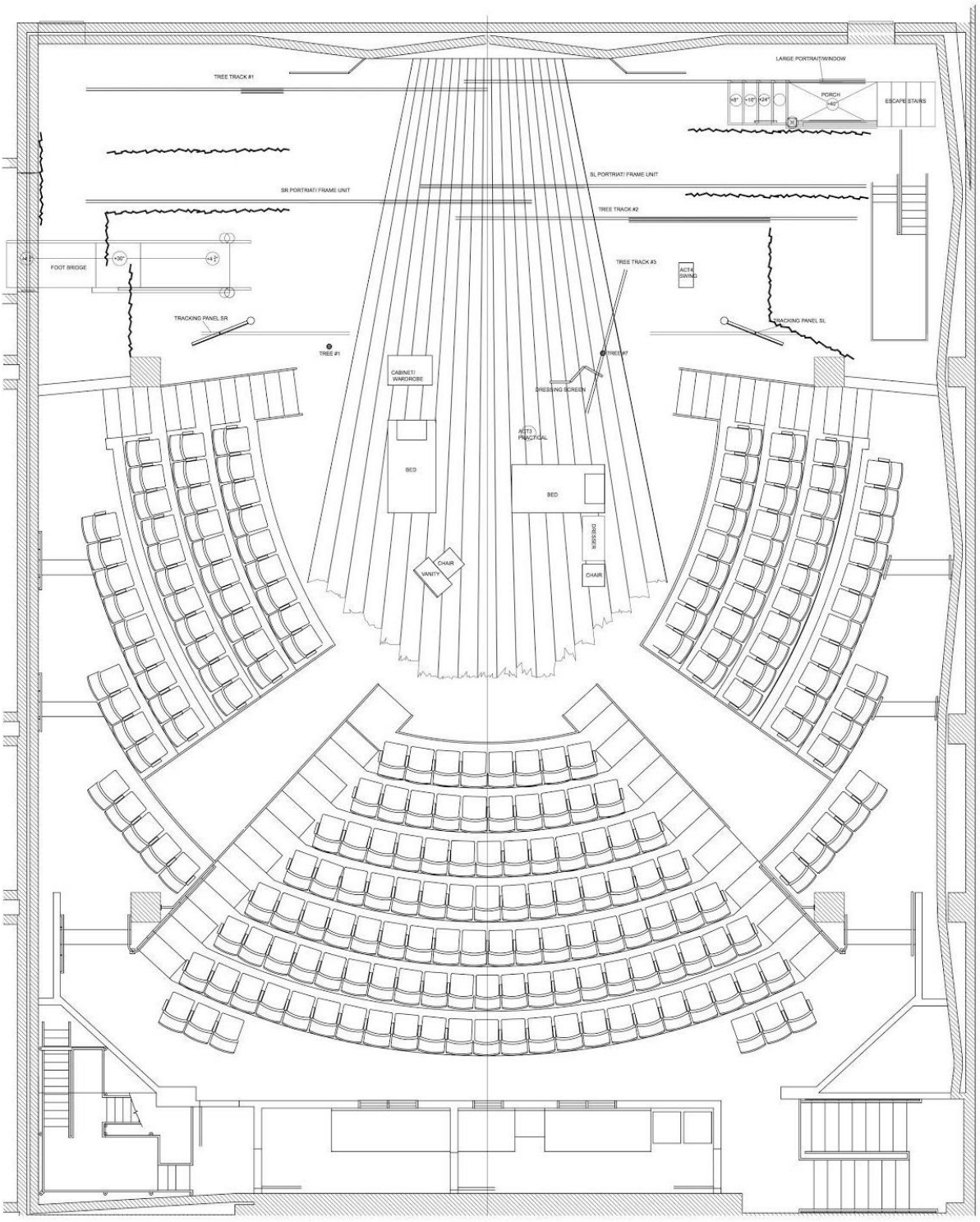
APPENDIX B: DRAFTING PLATES



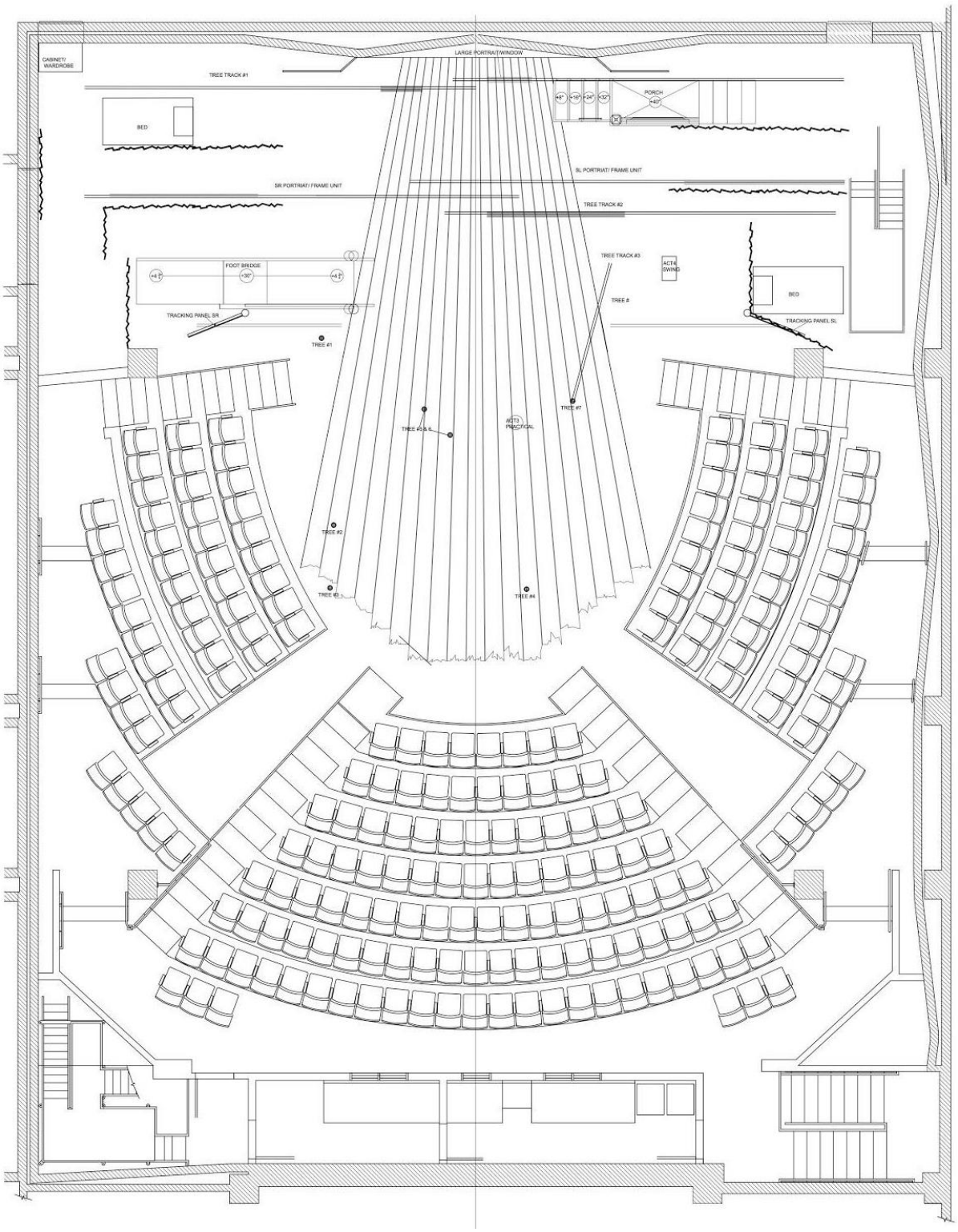
GROUNDPLAN OF ACT I



GROUNDPLAN OF ACT II



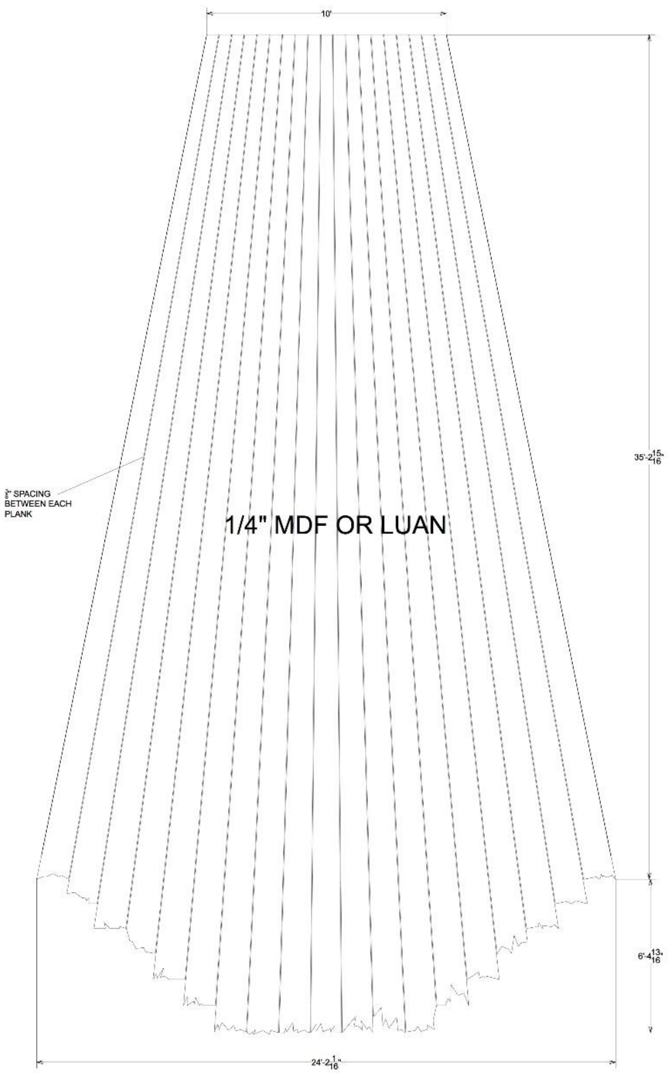
GROUNDPLAN OF ACT III



GROUNDPLAN OF ACT IV

THREE SISTERS

SECTION VIEW

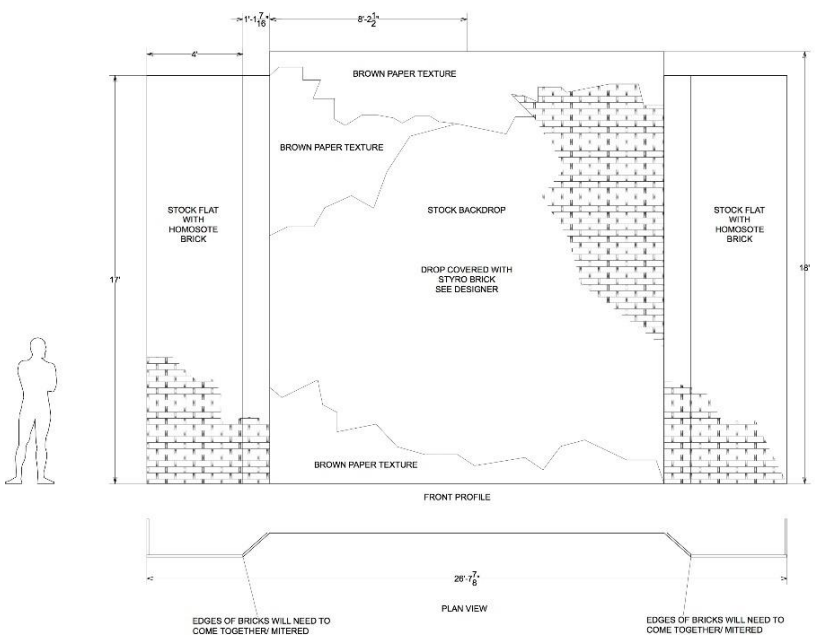


FLOOR BOARDS

1/5 — 1/2" = 1'-0"

NOTES:
- -FLOOR BOARDS ARE MADE OUT OF EITHER 1/4" MDF OR LUAN
- -TEXTURE WILL BE ADDED ON AREAS WITH BLACK LATEX ROOF GUARD MIXED WITH SAW-DUST AND OR SAND
- -3/8" GAP BETWEEN EACH FLOOR BOARD
- -THE VERY SIDES MAY NEED TO BEVEL FOR FURNITURE PIECES TO COME OFF
- -SEE DESIGNER FOR QUESTIONS

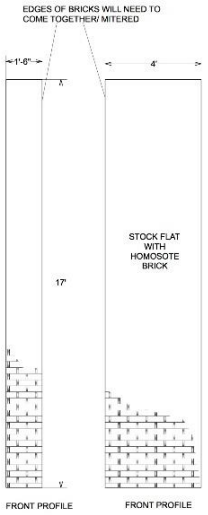
SCALE:	1/2" = 1'-0"
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR:	GARRETT WEISEL
DRAFTER:	JAMES VINCENT RAYMOND
APPROVED BY:	STEVEN NEUENSCHWANDER
DIRECTOR:	JERRY McGONIGLE
SCENIC DESIGNER:	JAMES VINCENT RAYMOND
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY	THREE SISTERS
DATE:	9/ 8/17
PLATE #:	6 OF 11



1/6 BACKWALL UNIT

1/2"= 1'-0"

NOTES:
-THE BACKWALL CONSISTS OF 2 PREXSISTING BRICK FLATS WITH A DROP (SEE DESIGNER) IN THE CENTER
-THE DROP AND FLATS WILL GET TEXTURED WITH BLACK ROOF GUARD MIXED WITH SAW-DUCT AND SAND
-THE CENTER DROP WILL HAVE 1" OR 2" GREEN FOAM CUT AS BRICKS AND GREEN GLUED ATTACHED.
-ALL BRICKS NEED TO MATCH PATTERN
-THE STICKOUT PANEL EDGE WILL NEED TO MATCH THE STOCK BRICK FLATS



2/6 STICKOUT SIDE PANELS R&R

1/2"= 1'-0"

NOTES:
-MAKE SURE EACH CORNER BRICK MEET UP/BUTT UP AND MATCH EACHOTHER
-FOLLOW BRICK PATTERN ON STOCK FLATS
BRICKS ARE MADE OF HOMOSOTE
-SEE DESIGNER FOR QUESTIONS

SCALE:
1/2"=1'-0"

DRAWN BY:

CHECKED BY:

APPROVED BY:

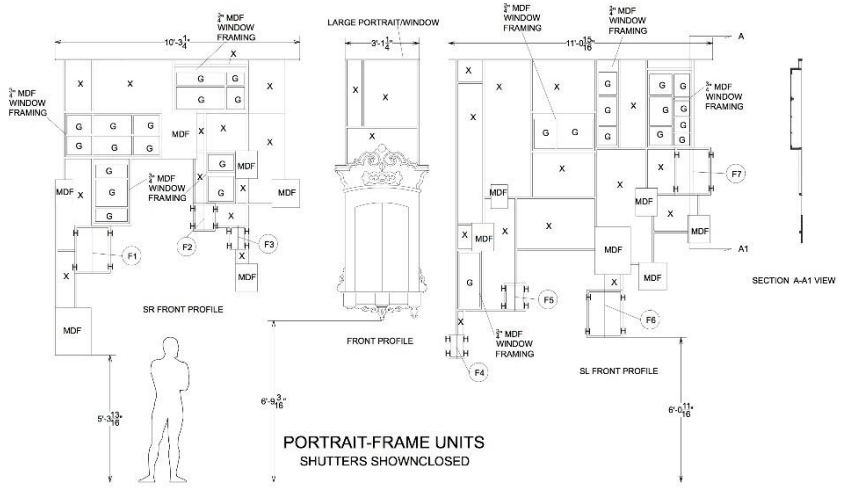
DESIGNER

SCENIC SUPERVISOR

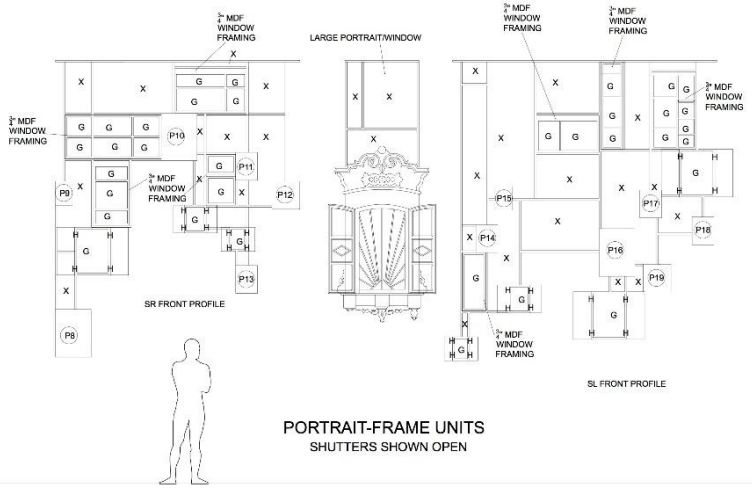
THREE SISTERS

DWG:
9/15/17

SHEET #:
7 OF 11

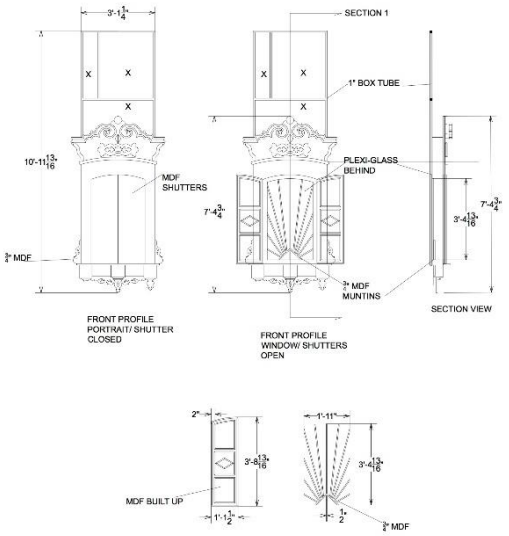


PORTRAIT-FRAME UNITS
SHUTTERS SHOWNCLOSED



PORTRAIT-FRAME UNITS
SHUTTERS SHOWN OPEN

1/7 PORTRIAT-FRAME UNITS
1/2"= 1'-0"



1/7 LARGE PORTRAIT/WINDOW UNIT
1/2"= 1'-0"

NOTES:
-H = HINGES
-G = PLEXI-GLASS
-X = OPEN

-THE FRAMES THAT HAVE HINGES ARE MDF FRAMES THAT SPLIT CENTER WITH PLEXI-GLASS BEHIND ATTACHED TO THE METAL FRAMING
-FRAMING IS MADE OUT OF 1" BOX TUBE
-PLEXI-GLASS HAS SCULPTURE-OR-COAT OR FROST FINISH
-SEE PLATE #8 FOR DETAIL OF PICTURE FRAMES & WINDOWS
-SEE DESIGNER FOR QUESTIONS

SCALE: 1/2"=1'-0"

DATE: 9/13/17

PLATE #: 5 OF

THREE SISTERS

PORTRIAT-FRAME & WINDOW UNITS

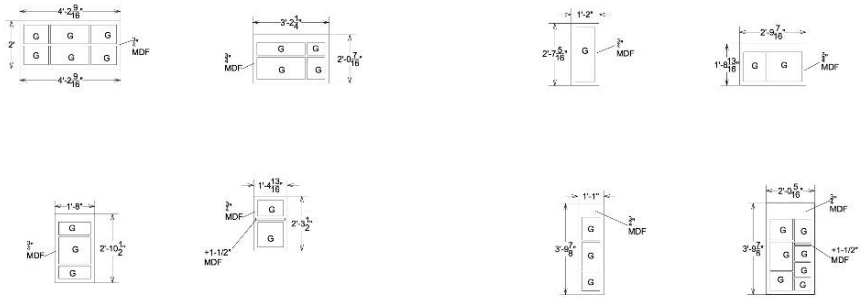
1/2" = 1'-0"

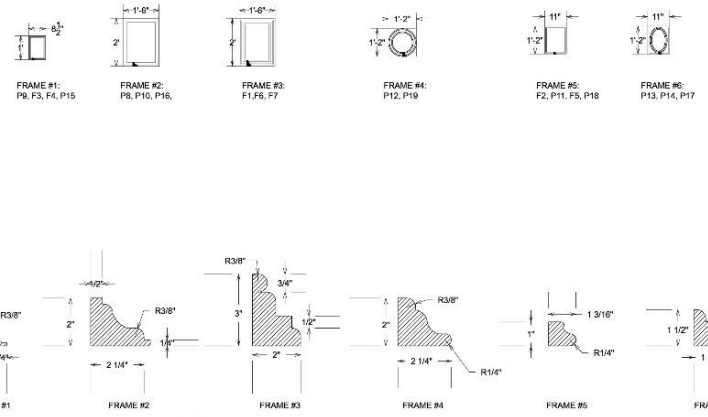
NOTES:
-H = HINGES
-G = PLEXI-GLASS
-X = OPEN

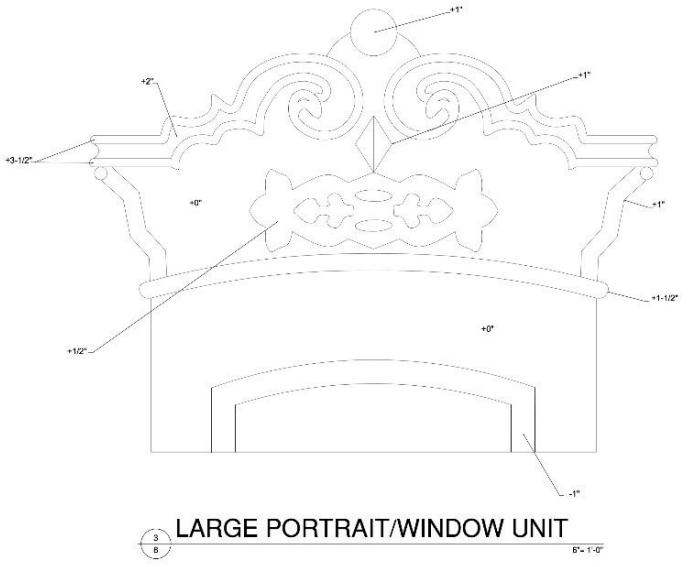
-F1-F7= PICTURE FRAMES WITH SHUTTERS SPLIT OPEN TO BE WINDOWS

P8-P19= PICTURE FRAMES

-THE PICTURE FRAMES ARE MADE OF MDF
-FRAMES (F1-F7) ARE MADE OF MDF THAT SPLIT CENTER SHUTTERS WITH PLEXI-GLASS BEHIND ATTACHED TO THE 1" BOX TUBE FRAMING
-SHUTTERS WILL NEED SOME SORT OF EYE HOOK TO OPEN AND MAGNETS TO KEEP CLOSE OR KEEP OPEN
-THERE WILL NEED TO BE A STAFF BUILT (MAYBE PROPS) WITH A HOOK AT THE END OF IT TO HELP OPEN SHUTTERS
-ALL WINDOWS HAVE PLEXI-GLASS ATTACHED WITH SCULPT-OR-COAT OR FROST FINISH APPLIED
-WINDOW MUNTINS CAN BE MADE OUT OF EITHER MDF OR PLY OR 1X
-SEE DESIGNER FOR QUESTIONS





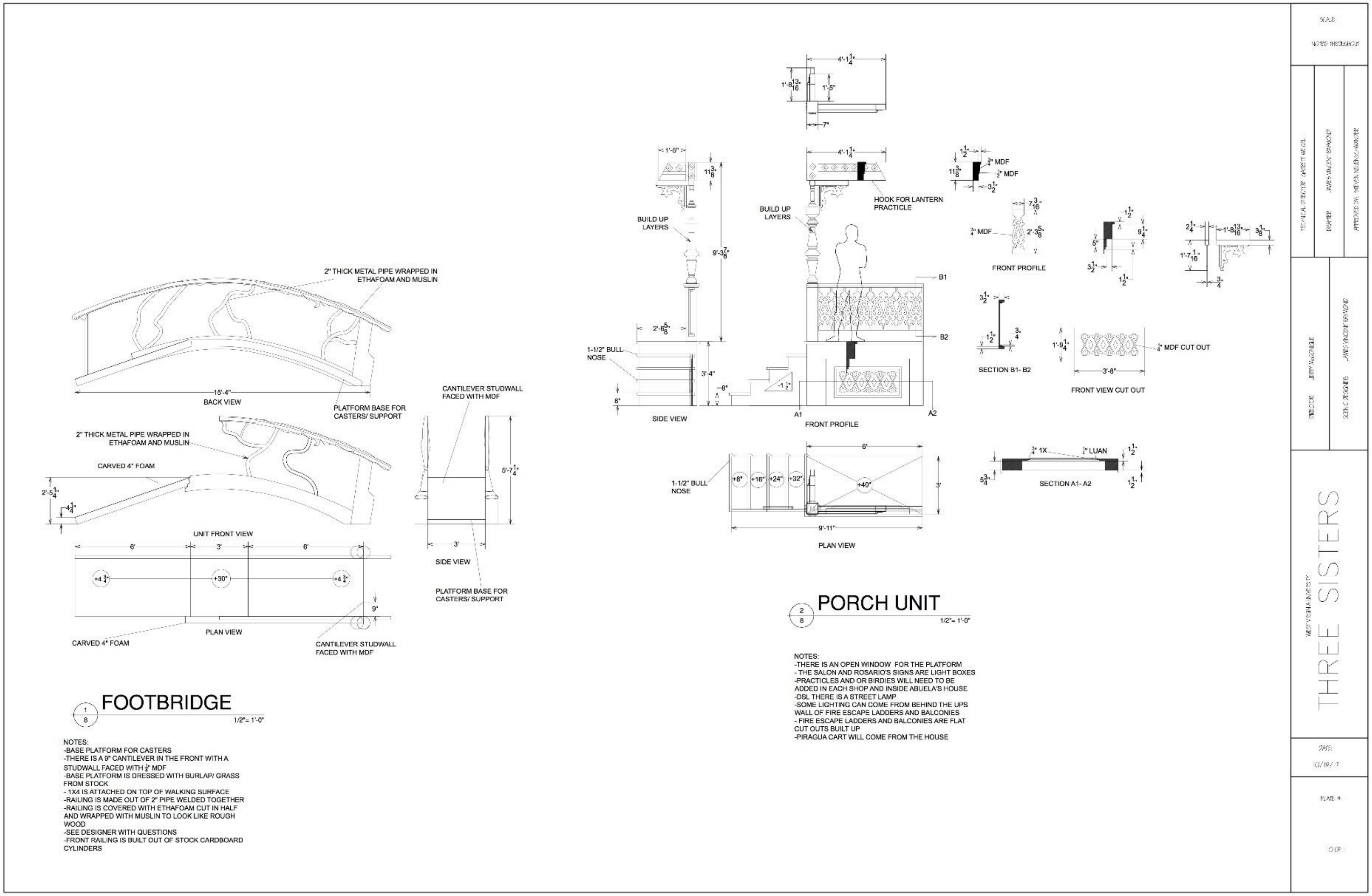


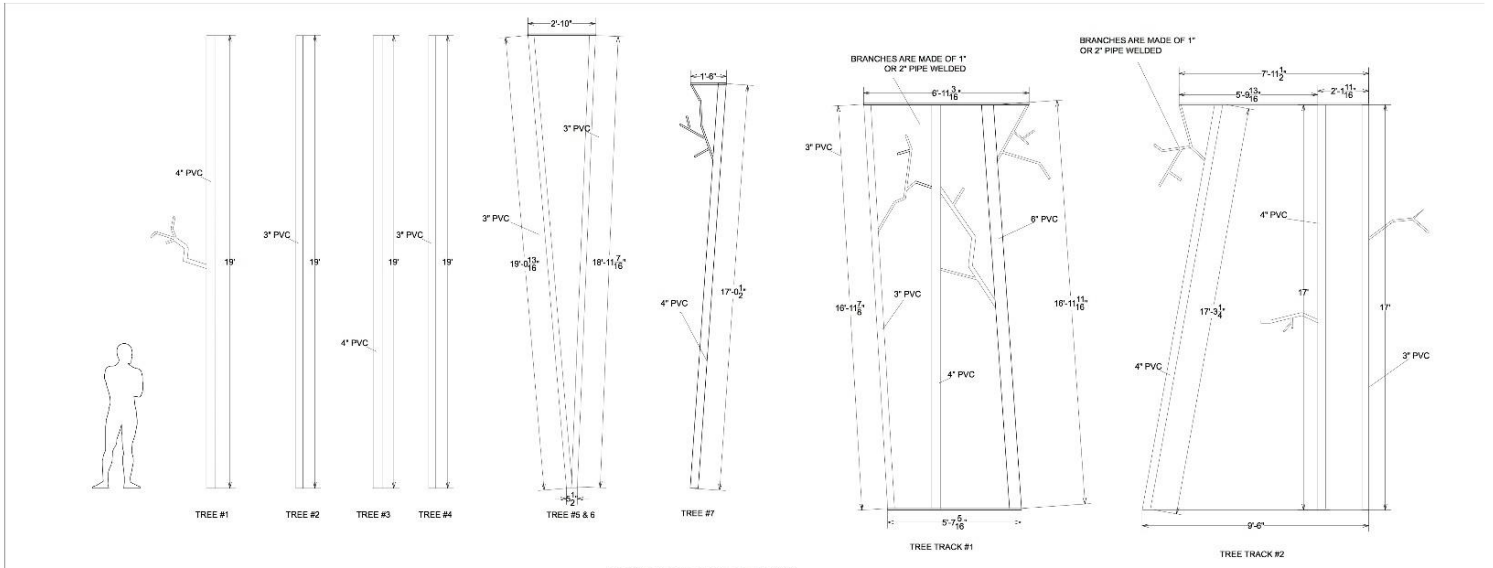
SCALE
1/2" = 1'-0"

THREE SISTERS

DATE
10/19/17

PAGE #
9 OF


THREE SISTERS
FOOTBRIDGE
1/2" = 1'-0"
BACK VIEW
UNIT FRONT VIEW
PLAN VIEW
SIDE VIEW
2" THICK METAL PIPE WRAPPED IN ETHAFOAM AND MUSLIN
PLATFORM BASE FOR CASTERS/ SUPPORT
CANTILEVER STUDWALL FACED WITH MDF
CARVED 4" FOAM
NOTES:
-BASE PLATFORM FOR CASTERS
-THERE IS A 9" CANTILEVER IN THE FRONT WITH A STUDWALL FACED WITH 3/4" MDF
-BASE PLATFORM IS DRESSED WITH BURLAP/ GRASS FROM STOCK
- 1X4 IS ATTACHED ON TOP OF WALKING SURFACE
-RAILING IS MADE OUT OF 2" PIPE WELDED TOGETHER
-RAILING IS COVERED WITH ETHAFOAM CUT IN HALF AND WRAPPED WITH MUSLIN TO LOOK LIKE ROUGH WOOD
-SEE DESIGNER WITH QUESTIONS
-FRONT RAILING IS BUILT OUT OF STOCK CARDBOARD CYLINDERS
PORCH UNIT
1/2" = 1'-0"
SIDE VIEW
FRONT PROFILE
PLAN VIEW
SECTION B1- B2
SECTION A1- A2
FRONT VIEW CUT OUT
1/4" MDF CUT OUT
HOOK FOR LANTERN PRACTICLE
BUILD UP LAYERS
1-1/2" BULL NOSE
1X
1/4" LUAN
NOTES:
-THERE IS AN OPEN WINDOW FOR THE PLATFORM
- THE SALON AND ROSARIO'S SIGNS ARE LIGHT BOXES
-PRACTICLES AND OR BIRDIES WILL NEED TO BE ADDED IN EACH SHOP AND INSIDE ABUELA'S HOUSE
-DSL THERE IS A STREET LAMP
-SOME LIGHTING CAN COME FROM BEHIND THE UPS WALL OF FIRE ESCAPE LADDERS AND BALCONIES
- FIRE ESCAPE LADDERS AND BALCONIES ARE FLAT CUT OUTS BUILT UP
-PIRAGUA CART WILL COME FROM THE HOUSE



TRACKING TREE UNITS

FOUR UNITS WITH ALTOGETHER 14 TREES
TREES ARE 6" , 4" & 3" PVC SEE DESIGNER

TRACKING TREE UNITS

1/2"= 1'-0"

NOTES:
-6 PVC @ 3-1/2"
-3 PVC @ 4-1/2"
-4 PVC @ 6-1/2"
-TREES ARE TAPED WITH ETHAFOAM AND COVERED/WRAPPED IN MUSLIN
-SOME BRANCHES ARE MADE OUT OF EITHER 2" OR 1" BOX TUBE FOR EXTRA FRAMING
-BRANCHES ARE TAPED WITH ETHAFOAM AND COVERED/WRAPPED IN MUSLIN
-TREES ARE TRACKED ON STAGE LIKE CURTAIN PULLEY FROM OFFSTAGE
-SOME TREES HAVE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM AS THEY TRACKED ON
-DIRECTOR AND DESIGNER WILL DISCUSS WHERE THE TREES STOP ON THE TRACK
-SEE DESIGNER FOR QUESTIONS

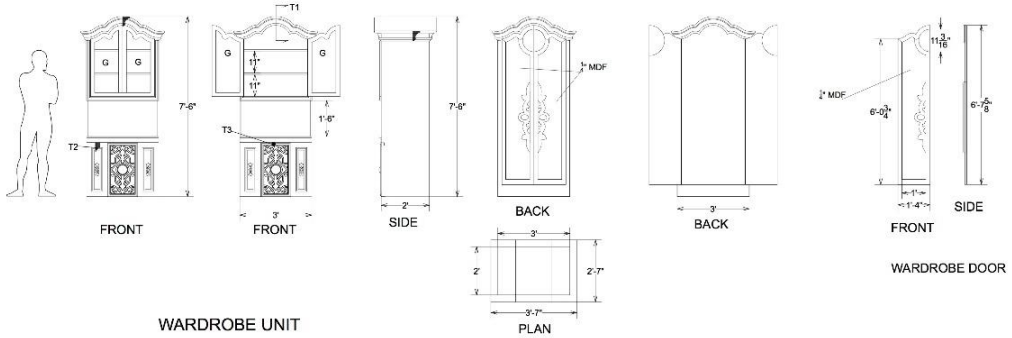
SCALE
1/2"=1'-0"

DESIGNER
ASSISTANT DESIGNER
SCENIC ARTIST

THREE SISTERS

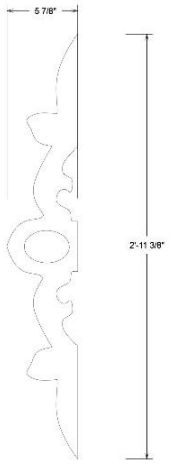
DATE
10/19/17

SHEET #
11 OF 11



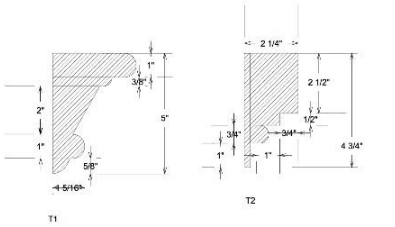
1/1 CABINET & WARDROBE UNIT

1/2"= 1'-0"



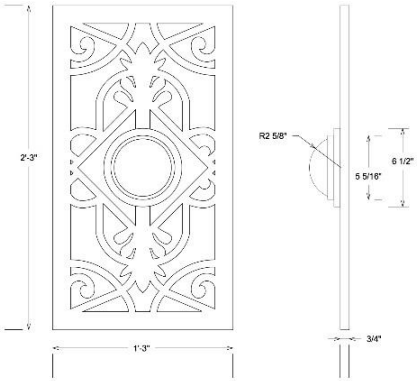
2/12 CABINET & WARDROBE UNIT

3"= 1'-0"



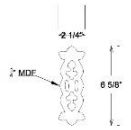
3/12 CABINET & WARDROBE UNIT

6"= 1'-0"



4/12 CABINET & WARDROBE UNIT

3"= 1'-0"



5/12 CABINET & WARDROBE UNIT

3"= 1'-0"

NOTES:
-CABINET &WARDROBE UNIT ACTS AS ONE
-WARDROBE SIDE WILL HAVE DOWLS ADDED FROM STOCK TO HANG COSTUMES
-SWIVEL CASTERS ARE HIDDEN AND TO MOVE BETWEEN ACTS
-SHELL CAN BE MADE OUT OF MDF OR PLY
-SEE DESIGNER FOR QUESTIONS

SCALE:
NOTED THROUGHOUT

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: CHRISTY WELCH
DRAFTER: JAMES VINCENT DIAMOND
APPROVED BY: STEVEN BERKOWITZ

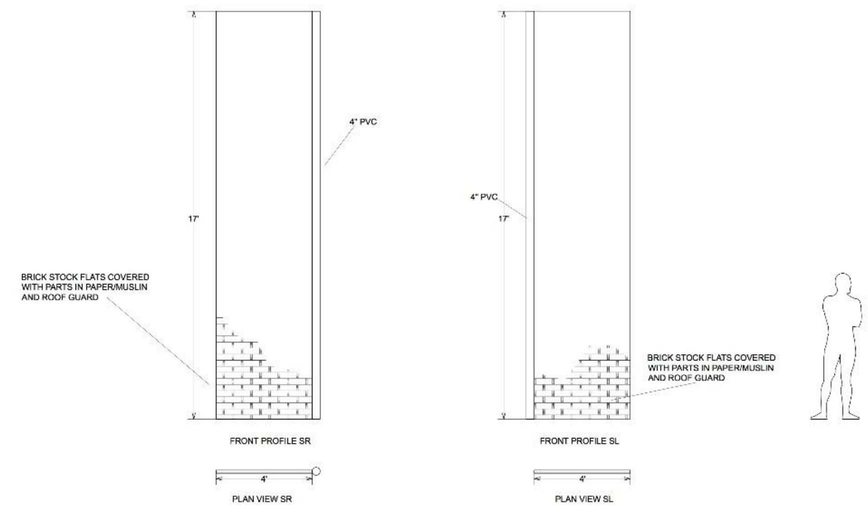
DIRECTOR: JERRY MACKENZIE
SCENIC DESIGNER: JAMES VINCENT DIAMOND

NEW VIC IN RESIDENCY
THREE SISTERS

DATE:
10 / 9 / 17

PLAN #:

12 07 15



1/13 TRACKING PANELS SR & SL

1/2"= 1'-0"

NOTES:
- -3 PVC @ 3-1/2"
- -2 PVC @ 4-1/2"
- -2 PVC @ 6-1/2"
- -PVC ON PANELS ARE CUT IN HALF
- -BROWN PAPER OR MUSLIN IS TEXTURED ON THE B SIDES
- -PANEL SWIVELS AROUND
- -USE THE BRICK STOCK FLATS FOR A SIDE
- -ROOF GUARD AND BROWN PAPER ADDED FOR TEXTURE
- -TREES ARE TAPED WITH ETHAFOAM AND COVERED/WRAPPED IN MUSLIN
- -SEE DESIGNER FOR QUESTIONS

THREE SISTERS

APPENDIX C: PRODUCTION IMAGES

ACT I

ACT I

ACT I

ACT I

ACT II

ACT II

ACT II

ACT II

ACT III

ACT III

ACT III

ACT III

ACT IV

ACT IV

ACT IV

ACT IV

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

NOTE: All work is property of the author except for the following:

Figure 2.1

Chekhov's Tri Sestry [Three Sisters] . 1901.

Figure 3.1

“Русское Деревянное Зодчество 16 Века.” *Https://Fotki.yandex.ru/next/Users/t-Rossohan/Album/149791/View/835451?Page=0*, 2015, www.liveinternet.ru/users/5282453/post377405563/.

Figure 3.2

“The Lilac (Mauve) Study.” *The Lilac Study*, The Tsarskoye Selo State Museum-Preserve, eng.tzar.ru/museums/palaces/alex_ander/exhibit/third_room.

Figure 3.3

Sorokina, Olga. “Cottage in Khotkovo.” *Www.admagazine.ru*, Architectural Digest, 23 July 2012, www.admagazine.ru/inter/at-home/7015_dacha-v-khotkovo.php.

Figure 3.4

Taylor, Medford. “A Forest Of White Birch Trees Betula Greeting Card for Sale by Medford Taylor.” *Fine Art America*, Betula Greeting Card, fineartamerica.com/featured/1-a-forest-of-white-birch-trees-betula-medford-taylor.html?product=greeting-card.

Figure 3.5

“Kin's Settlement, Anastasia, The Ringing Cedars of Russia, Ancient Slavic Sacral Symbolism in Architecture, Kin's Settlement Skazochny Krai.” *RingingCedarsofRussia.org*, The Earth, Online Monthly Newspaper, May 2015, www.ringingcedarsofrussia.org/anastasia/kins-settlement.html.

Figure 4.5

Sheppard, Tina. “Birch BWS.” *Canvasandsoul.com*, http://www.canvasandsoul.com/palette-knife/birch-bws/, www.canvasandsoul.com/portfolio/birch-trees/.

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Klingelhoefer, Robert. *The Craft and Art of Scenic Design: Strategies, Concepts, and Resources*. Routledge, 2017.

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