

7-2020

Scenic Design for “Topdog Underdog”

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Scenic Design for “Topdog Underdog”

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Scenic Design

by

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Northwestern State University
Bachelor of Science in Theatre, 2016

July 2020
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

The 2019 production of *Topdog/Underdog* by Suzan-Lori Parks at the University of Arkansas was produced with a guest director who, throughout the process of the production, experimented with the typical perception of the Pulitzer Prize winning play and added conceptual spins to help open the eyes of the mostly small town and rural based audience. This thesis will explore the various elements of this particular production and which of these elements contributed to exploring the depths of *Topdog/Underdog*.

This document will analyze the design process of the University of Arkansas's production of *Topdog/Underdog*, and will analyze specific design choices which were chosen to engender a specific audience response based upon observed audience commentary.

Acknowledgements

To my family, even though we are apart through support and love we are always together.

To my girlfriend, who supported me throughout every process of the last three years.

To Kevin, you helped me so much through the process of *Topdog/Underdog* and continue to help me today. I cherish having had the chance to meet you and I am so glad to call you a friend.

To Mr. C and Mrs. Ingle, you both are the foundation on which everything I've achieved is built on. I cannot thank you enough.

To Brandon and Kathleen, we stuck to it and we made it together. Thanks for always being there for me throughout our various endeavors.

To all the faculty and staff at the University of Arkansas Department of Theatre, for putting up with me and constantly helping focus my energy on productivity and creativity.

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction -	...Page 1
II. The Play -	...Page 2
A. Synopsis-	...Page 2
B. Historical Context of the Play-	...Page 3
C. Analysis-	...Page 4
III. The Process –	...Page 9
A. Early Conversations with the Director-	...Page 9
B. Design Meetings and Approach-	...Page 12
C. Implementation-	...Page 17
IV. Reflection –	...Page 21
A. Audience Reaction-	...Page 22
B. Personal Thoughts-	...Page 25
V. Bibliography –	...Page 28
VI. Appendices –	...Page 29
Appendix A: Research Images	...Page 29
Appendix B: Scenographic Breakdown	...Page 40
Appendix C: Early Sketches	...Page 44
Appendix D: White Model	...Page 46
Appendix E: Digital 3-D Model	...Page 51
Appendix F: Digital Rendering	...Page 53
Appendix G: Final Drafting Packet	...Page 54
Appendix H: Paint Elevation	...Page 60
Appendix I: Production Photos	...Page 61

I. Introduction

Topdog/Underdog is a landmark play in the world of theatre. It was the play that led Suzan-Lori Parks to become the first African American Woman in history to win a Pulitzer Prize in drama. Working on it was a fantastic journey that challenged me as a scenic designer and more importantly as an artist overall. As the Scenic Designer, my job is to conceptualize a space in which the characters make sense and can evolve. This must be done subtly so as not to become the primary focus but should be a part of the overall presentation. This is especially important with a play like *Topdog/Underdog* due to its intense and important messages including race, oppression, and classism. I believed that analyzing the intricacies of each scene in the form of a scenographic breakdown (Appendix B) was the best way to help track the action and time of day in the show was the best way to follow the script as the design team moved through it.

After making my scenographic breakdown and creating some image boards and sketches, I participated in a series of design meetings with my colleagues on the design team. These meetings are a means to aid the director and all the designers in both collaboration and communication. Having all of the designers in the same room with the director can help inspire creative ideas and aid in the communicative process. During the meeting process, I was able to create a white model, a digital 3D model, and a drafting packet, which became the template from which we used to build the show. (Appendix G) This play contains an ample amount of metaphor and symbolic representation and therefore I tried to reflect that in the scenic design as well. I was extremely pleased with this process as a whole as well as the final outcome of my design for this production.

II. The Play

A. Synopsis

Topdog/Underdog is a play about Lincoln and Booth, two African American brothers who have been brought up and molded by various forms of pressure and racism rooted in American society. Together they face poverty, relationship problems, racism, and a shared and troubled upbringing.

Lincoln is temporarily staying in his younger brother Booth's rooming house room. The two brothers both survive only on Lincoln's meager paycheck from an arcade where Lincoln works as an Abraham Lincoln impersonator. Booth is desperately trying to learn how to play three-card monte in an effort to earn a living. He keeps trying to persuade Lincoln to teach him to play three-card monte because Lincoln himself has a dark past when he chose to use the street game as a con to provide for himself and his brother. After the death of one of his crew members, Lincoln swore off the game forever and therefore refuses to help Booth learn the trade.

Booth is constantly trying to impress his girlfriend Grace with an assortment of shoplifted goods; he excels at thievery of this kind. He also often will discuss he and Grace's sexual engagements with his brother. Lincoln returns this gesture with small conversations about how his ex-wife kicked him out. A lot of the character's actions through the play are fueled by either on-going stress or past stress with these women. In Booth's case the, various stressors in his life coupled with an un-fulfilled sense of his existence leads him to kill Grace and Lincoln.

Booth and Lincoln's parents left them at a young age. Their mother left first, leaving Booth five hundred dollars in a nylon stocking, and she told him not to tell his brother about the money. Two years later, their father left leaving Lincoln the same amount of money and relayed to him a similar message about not letting Booth know he had it. However, Booth held on to his

"inheritance" and Lincoln spent his. Their parents' departure and advice for them to stick together "She told me to look out for you. I told her I was the little brother and the big brother should look out after the little brother. She just said it again." (Parks Page 19) left Lincoln to look after Booth and led him to his life of a con man. Lincoln did not have many skills when his parents left, and he discovered from people who were in the streets with him that he could make a decent living playing cards.

Lincoln ends up losing his job at the arcade to a wax dummy. He plays three-card monte again, to reclaim his success after being fired from his job and comes home with an ample amount of winnings. He returns home to find Booth claiming he has proposed to Grace. Three-card monte is discussed along with the money won from the day, and Booth's inheritance gets put on the line. Lincoln ends up winning the game of three-card monte, and this becomes the straw that breaks the camel's back for Booth which results in Booth's eventual mental breakdown and loss of his inheritance. Booth then reveals that he shot Grace and dares Lincoln to cut open the stocking containing the money. Lincoln tries to give it back as Booth forces him to cut it open. As Lincoln makes the cut Booth shoots him. Booth breaks down over the body of his now-dead brother.

B. Historical Context

Written by Suzan-Lori Parks, *Topdog/Underdog* debuted at the Public Theatre on July 26th, 2001. The play starred Don Cheadle and Jeffrey Wright as Booth and Lincoln respectively. It was directed by George C. Wolfe, best known at the time for his Tony award-winning production of *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*. The Off-Broadway run concluded on September 2, 2001, and moved to the Ambassador Theatre. It then opened there on Broadway on

April 7, 2002, and ran through August 11th that same year. Of this production, Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* wrote:

Topdog/Underdog considers nothing less than the existential traps of being African-American and male in the United States, the masks that wear the men as well as vice versa. But don't think for a second that Ms. Parks is delivering a lecture or reciting a ponderous poem. Under the bravura direction of George C. Wolfe, a man who understands that showmanship and intellectual substance are not mutually exclusive, '*Topdog/Underdog*' is a deeply theatrical experience. (Brantley)

A mere fifteen days after opening the show on Broadway, Suzan-Lori Parks was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Suzan-Lori Parks became the first African-American woman in history to win a Pulitzer Prize in Drama (Tikkanen). The Pulitzer website reads:

"A darkly comic fable of brotherly love and family identity, *Topdog/Underdog* tells the story of Lincoln and Booth, two brothers whose names, given to them as a joke, foretelling a lifetime of sibling rivalry and resentment. Haunted by their past, the brothers are forced to confront the shattering reality of their future." (Columbia University).

C. Analysis

I think the meaning of the play isn't just confined to a man's experience... I think it's about what it means to be family and, in the biggest sense, the family of man, what it means to be connected with somebody else." She [Parks] noted that the play speaks to "who the world thinks you're going to be, and how you struggle with that. (Teague)

Topdog/Underdog is told in a poetic and abstract fashion. Time passes at uneven intervals, and some of the dialogue works as a type of aside to the audience when other characters seem to still be present or asleep. For example, Booth's shoplifting seems to be unrealistic due to the quantity for his one-stop stealing session: 2 Full suits, alcohol, dinner/drinkware, and a full-sized dressing screen.

Yeah, I boosted em. Theys stole from a big-ass department store. That store takes in more money in one day than we will in our whole life. I stole and I stole generously. I got one for me and I got one for you. Shoes belts shirts ties socks in the shoes and everything. Got that screen too. (Parks, Page 26)

His thievery brings in a bit of irony to the story because one of their main problems is not having money because, it seems within the context of the play they do not necessarily need money due to Booth's extraordinary shoplifting ability. If they do need money Lincoln could theoretically pull in an ample amount in one day playing three-card monte on the streets as he does in the script.

"He pulls an enormous wad of money from his pocket. He counts it slowly and luxuriously, arranging and smoothing the bills and sound the amounts under his breath. He neatly rolls up the money, secures it with a rubber band and puts it back in his pocket. He relaxes in his chair. Then he takes the money out again, counting it all over again, but the time quickly, with the touch of an expert hustler." (Parks, Page 82)

The play takes place in Booth's apartment, but in the context of the script, the city where they live is not directly disclosed.

When I'm writing *Topdog/Underdog*, what am I seeing? I'm seeing them in their room. Now, is that a real room or is that a room in a play? I don't know. What I don't see are the heads of the audience, and I'm not waiting for the audience to laugh at a joke, or gasp at a particular part, or scratch their heads. I write with both eyes on the work, so I don't write by looking over my shoulder and trying to wonder what the audience's reaction is going to be. Not that I don't care about the audience, but if one's play, song, movie, or whatever is worth anything, there is going to be an audience so vast that we waste time trying to second guess the minds of an enormity. I'm not writing for them. I'm writing for the characters. The characters have a story that they need to tell through their actions and their dialogue, and that's what I'm listening to. (Myers)

...A seedily furnished rooming house room. A bed, a reclining chair, a small wooden chair, some other stuff but not much else. (Parks, Page 5)

The Specificity of a city greatly affects how living spaces are presented in a scenic design because of differing economic cultures or available technological resources. *Topdog/Underdog's* unannounced city allows the set to be conceptualized in different geographical locations. By not stating the city the writer has created a story applicable to different people in a variety of situations. This abstraction translates to a design that does not necessarily have to be set in a city

like Chicago or New York. As long as the themes portrayed by the characters are addressed fully, the target setting can then be approached with more complex concepts like differing dimensions or planets other than Earth.

Having won the imaginary loot and dodged the imaginary cops, Booth sets up his equipment and start practicing his scam all over again (Parks, Page 6)

An extremely important aspect for a Scenic Designer to investigate is when the play occurs. Though the play was written in 1999 and debuted in 2001 the date is not indicated. Like the setting, there is not a specific time period that is stated by the playwright within the script, this seems to be done in order to maintain universality to the play itself. Having this universality would allow various productions experiment with the show and how it could be portrayed differently in different cities. Because the text includes such elements as a phone, electricity, and a bus system we know that the setting is quasi-modern, probably within the last 70 years. The more commonplace use of cell phones still works within the confines of the script even though it was meant to refer to a landline in the room, this works because of the previously mentioned universal nature of the play.

...2) that you is in possession of a telephone and a working telephone number which is to say tht you got thuh cash and thuh wherewithal to acquire for yr self he world most revolutionary communication apparatus and you together enough to pay yr bills! (Parks 30)

Another important element to consider is the characters themselves. Who Lincoln and Booth are make up the central theme of the play. In the style of naturalism, Booth and Lincoln are products of their environment. Therefore, the setting must reflect a place that could fashion characters such as these to exist, but not take away any focus from the characters due to how utterly character-driven this show is. I believe the play being character driven, is the only rule

that the playwright aims to convey within the script. Beyond that, the location and scenery could essentially be anywhere and anything if the director/designer team can justify it in the script.

A major aspect of character that Parks included within the play is the language used. We find that Booth and Lincoln both speak English with a dialect that is written into the wording of the script that leans towards African American Vernacular.

"Shit man, it aint like they both one day both, together packed all they shit up and left us so they could have fun in thuh sun or some tropical island and you and me would have to grub in thuh dirt forever." (Parks)

The way that Suzan-Lori Parks writes out the dialogue for her plays is typically in the style of AAL or African-American Language "It was as if culture had caught up to the play somehow. Everybody was well-versed in hip-hop, Ebonics, jazz speak. The language of the play is concrete, yet it's abstract." (Myers) The use of dialogue in this way is reflective of Shakespeare's use of Iambic Pentameter in that both are crafted to sound musical or poetic when spoken. Park's use of AAL in *Topdog/Underdog* has the advantage of sounding, at once, both poetic and real which is a testament to her skill as an author. "It is important to remember that AAL is a very oral language and when the words written on the page are given life by the speaker they change in a way that give them rhythm and flow." (Lewis)

When looking at the facts of who Booth and Lincoln are as characters, we have most of the elements of the story right in front of us. Lincoln and Booth are brothers who were abandoned at a young age. Lincoln was older and took to the streets so that he may provide for them. Currently, Lincoln is employed at an arcade and Booth is working on his street hustling skills to try and provide in a similar manner to how his brother had before. They are products of an extremely economically impoverished environment, which also supports the argument for the play being naturalistic since naturalistic plays typically focus on stories centered around low-

income characters. They live poorly but do have the means to pull in relatively large sums of money quickly. Another question that I would like to ask is "What do the brothers think of each other?".

Lincoln thinks that Booth is dangerous and wasting his time trying to learn to throw cards because he is very bad at it. He also thinks that Booth should look into getting an honest job so that he could earn an honest living. Lincoln has underlying resentment toward Booth, because that Lincoln had to take care of him, and, that despite being jobless, Booth is the one that owns the apartment that they currently share. The principle action that led to Lincoln's hatred of Booth was that Booth slept with Lincoln's wife, which led to Lincoln's divorce and current predicament.

Resentment is a two-way street with these brothers. Booth hates that he cannot throw cards, play three-card monte, like Lincoln. He is jealous of the way Lincoln can handle himself in low and high stress social situations. Booth wants to be better than his brother in every way, but the only thing Lincoln has is his three-card monte skills which he refuses to use, which in turn is what is most important to Booth. Booth's cancerous onslaught on Lincoln's life leads directly to his death at the end of the play.

You aint gonna be needing yr fucking money-roll no more, dead mother fucker, so I will pocket it thank you. (Parks)

Topdog/Underdog is a look into two brothers' lives that have been formed under the pressure of oppression and a system that was constructed to be against them. They have adapted to survive in such a way that they become parasitic to each other, which ultimately leads to Lincoln's last moments within the play. The play is written in such a way that the reader feels bad for both Booth and Lincoln and aims to leave the audience with a feeling of helplessness and even shame.

III. The Process

A. Early Conversations with the Director

When the design assignments for the graduate scenic designers were distributed at the end of the spring semester 2018, I was very excited to learn I was getting to work on a show that I had not read and to work with a guest director. Working with a director from outside of the program was a privilege due to the potential networking opportunities it could afford me. I read the play immediately. The ending of the play floored me, and I felt that there were a myriad of design and production opportunities to explore. I even started to formulate some ideas to articulate to the director.

I obtained the director, Kevin R. Free's, email as soon as I could. I took some time to review his website and resume and introduced myself a few days later via email. This was several months in advance of the beginning of the formal meeting process, but I was excited to get to work. I received a response soon after, which was as equally enthusiastic as my own. We started discussing the characters of *Topdog/Underdog*, themes, and elements we pulled out from the script. It turns out that we had many of the same thoughts on the play, and in the event that one of us had a different idea, the other was open to explore it immediately.

As ideas started being shared, my excitement began to grow. Mr. Free sent me a picture he took of a painting that he saw at the National Museum for Women in the Arts, *The Father of Evolution: The Old Study of Charles Darwin* by Julie Roberts. (Appendix A.1) Mr. Free felt that the painting reflected the small space and feeling of Booth's apartment and wanted to try and capture that feeling on-stage.

In the same email, he expressed to me his thoughts on how some of the play's motifs relate to the Civil War such as the horrific idea of "brother vs. brother." Mr. Free posed the

questions: What are the results of such a war? What did it mean then? What does it mean now? What is the inheritance we all must claim because of both the American Civil War and our individual civil wars within our personal lives? Booth and Lincoln, similar to their namesakes from the Civil War, face a lot of societal and personal backlash from their wars waged with themselves, against each other, and even between their parents. Their resentment towards each other, as well as their resentment towards their parents, fuel nearly every action from both characters throughout the play.

In hindsight, this email really was sort of a fundamental through-line for the entire production process because Mr. Free also brought up the idea of adding additional characters that act outside of the play. He was not sure how to recommend such an idea yet, and he asked me to keep that last idea confidential so that I could help him develop it further before presenting it to the rest of the production team. Little did I know each of these ideas in this email would come to fruition throughout the design process.

In response, I took the picture of the painting he sent me and combed through the pages of the script, exploring different ways to help convey the unbalanced nature caused by the opposing demographic of the characters in the play. I researched different aspects of forced perspective and how specific usage of lines and ideas can cause the audience to perceive the size of the characters changing as they move upstage to downstage. (Appendix A.2) Positioning the characters on the stage, with perspective in mind, makes them seem more or less significant compared to the size of their surroundings. The thematic idea was that the brothers both appear to be from an alternate existence and cannot help but to feel like they do not belong, which is why their size would not look correct to the eyes of the audience visually portraying the characters being out of place. To help illustrate this idea to Mr. Free, I took the image he sent me

"The Father of Evolution: The Old Study of Charles Darwin" and added in silhouettes in perspective. (Appendix A.2).

His response was swift. He explained that the idea of the forced perspective was interesting due to the vast pressure it could create for the characters. What really caught his eye though was how two brothers could be from another world. From this work we developed the idea that the outside world made up of oppression and racism could be represented on-stage. This way the audience could have a visual representation of the oppression and it could stay ever present in the story we were telling. In response Mr. Free said, "We are looking at something that is different, something we do not know about directly but is ever-present and can be or even is replicated over and over." This statement led to the selection of a thrust configuration because that provided ample space for additional characters to occupy while not interfering with the space typically occupied by the brothers. These characters became were then given the title of "docents". The docents could manipulate the lives of the brothers all while watching them from outside of the brother's knowledge or reach.

He went on to apply the forced perspective idea to the text and the action of the play. He saw that Lincoln feels small within the apartment because it belongs his brother. Due to his economic situation he has forced himself into he has to live at Booth's apartment. This creates in him a weakness, but right outside of the door the city adores him and he could easily find refuge or prosperity elsewhere. He is popular and had a following and skills that everyone knew about. Booth had the opposite reaction. Inside his apartment, he felt powerful because he could hold all of his material success over the head of his brother but outside of his front door, he was just the younger brother of Lincoln. Yes, he could steal things with un-natural ability, but he was still not

skilled at the one thing that matters to him, three-card monte. It means everything to him because he believes that the card game is why Lincoln became a legend within this social network.

From these emails, Mr. Free and I had a strong foundation from which we were able to begin the conversation with all of the other designers. The different forms of oppression, racism and marginalization, being physically represented in the space became a living part of the project throughout the entire design process. Mr. Free ended the email chain that preceded the design meetings by saying "I think we could sum up a concept of our production of the play as 'BE BIG'. "The desire to feel and recognize their power. Each one (the brothers) feels power at some point but loses it. I need to think more on it, but I think that's the struggle in the play between them."

B. Design Meetings and Approach

The design meeting process examined quite a few ideas and high concepts that helped support the goals chosen for this production. As a designer, what we all agreed upon on was both exhilarating and quite a challenge. Through the process, I approached the design team with numerous iterations and possibilities. In the end, we combined four big ideas into a single concept which eventually influenced the entire production.

In an effort to illustrate the pressure of the outside world, we decided to pursue what I had called my "Sword of Damocles" idea. The Sword of Damocles is a story that hails from Greek mythology. A man named Damocles accuses the gods, specifically Dionysus, of living in pure luxury while the humans must work to survive. Dionysus then decided to make an example of the man by giving Damocles the luxuries similar to that of the gods with the same pressure the gods were under. He gave him a throne that was extremely beautiful and comfortable, and he gave him equally beautiful servants. As Damocles sat upon the throne Dionysus also ordered a

sword hung by a horsehair to hang directly over his head. In the event, Damocles got distracted by any of the lavish niceties that were bestowed upon him the sword would drop and kill him. Damocles lasted very little time on the throne due to his instinct of self-preservation, for if he made the wrong decision he would be met with a sudden and violent end (Betts).

Dionysus set up this occurrence for Damocles to represent what we perceive as a happy or luxurious life of wealth but also added the sword to mimic the responsibility of running an empire (or in the god's case, the whole world). In conclusion, it only takes one false move to end the luxury and even life itself. In our production of *Topdog/Underdog*, I brought up the story of Damocles to illustrate the pressure that Lincoln and Booth are constantly under due to their skin color and economic class. They grew up in an environment where being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or even performing what seems to most people a regular day-to-day action could cost them everything, including their lives.

Exploring this idea further, I also brought up the possibility of using weapons that were indicative of the Civil War, more specifically on the side of the confederacy. This war represented a lot of things to the people of the United States, but the main theme of the war for most Americans is racism. I found pictures and models of old sabers, knives, and guns. We recreated these and tried to hang them with the blade tips pointing to the ground, so like Damocles, the real dangers of oppression, represented by the weapons above, are ever present.

The second idea I brought up to the design team was using the ground plan from the Oval Office in the White House (Appendix C.1 & C.2). The Oval Office has a very identifiable shape, and many quickly recognize the use of the oval-shaped rug and distinct placement of furniture. The Oval Office represents the idea of power in the minds of many Americans. For some people, it also represents the cornerstone of racism as this country was built on the backs of slaves. It

took nearly one-hundred years for The United States to decide that having slaves was wrong and free them. Enough support from the person in this office could have put the plan in to process much earlier, and maybe the world would be an different place than it is today.

This idea was also accepted with open arms by the director. The elongated thrust that was created by the protruding of the rugs was great for the space at the University of Arkansas Black-Box Theatre and the sightlines it provided. The semi-circular wall on the upstage side of the stage was used to help create a barrier between the performers and the "outside world". The positioning of the furniture was changed greatly to accommodate Booth's meager possessions, but the sitting and walking pattern of the show retained the basic layout of the Oval Office ground plan. Lincoln's chair that was placed upstage was to betoken the desk of the president. A lot of the movement of the show was blocked around this chair because of its metaphoric ties to the president's desk. Also, there are a few moments when Lincoln is not in the seat or on-stage at all. In those moments Booth liked to sit in the chair. This indicated Booth's longing to have what Lincoln had. A lot of the time when Booth and Lincoln were speaking, they would move to the downstage portion of the set where Booth's bed and a dining chair were placed. This represented the placement of the meeting couches in the Oval Office where some of the more casual meetings took place. (Appendix A.11) This is where Lincoln and Booth ate and typically played three-card Monte, which through the dialogue act as meetings, no matter the conversation, trying to play cards together, how to split up Lincoln's paycheck, or who slept with whose wife.

The director thought it very important to include some reference to death to be present throughout the play. This would help outline the severity of the world of the brothers and the play as the play went on. We illustrated this concept with house plants that would appear to die throughout the show. In the rendering of the set, there is a large plant that is approximately four

feet tall. Throughout the play, we wanted the audience to watch the plant die. Between specific scenes, a plant would be swapped out with one that was similar in size but looked unhealthier than the last. The final iteration was small and clearly dead. The people changing out the plant were a mix of docents and Lincoln. By mixing the characters responsible for changing the plant, we also had the opportunity to see Lincoln interacting more with the docents to show that whatever part of the conceptual setting they are a part of, on some level, he exists there as well.

The final idea that we packed into our production was the glue we as a design team had been looking for since the very first email exchanges. In my original emails with the director, he expressed wanting to bring in more characters in some non-speaking roles that represent the outside world. After some deliberation, Mr. Free brought up the idea that the show seen nightly by the audience is something that happens over and over, and at the end sets up and begins again, in the same way that injustices that may happen to one individual will happen again to another individual in similar circumstance in a vicious cycle. This brought us to a group consensus that it seemed like the show *Top Dog/Underdog* was a gallery production staged in a museum as an educational exhibit.

The director wanted to include various "exhibits" the docents could perform for people. This was done to give the docents a little more character as well as introduce the audience to the museum concept of our world of *Topdog/Underdog* before they even stepped into the theatre. Some of the exhibits included: Card Tricks, Darts, A presentation involving Powerball winners who lost their riches, a palm reader, and dart throwing. The docents also acted as ushers getting the audience into the theatre and seated before the start of the show.

This idea worked in a myriad of ways. The brothers are exhibits to the bestowers of the white gaze. They act as a sort of spectacle that the docents, who are the oppressors, use as

entertainment. The museum could act as the consciousness of Lincoln as a whole, and the audience are the onlookers of a show put on by the museum. We now had a final button that held everything together, and Mr. Free had his way to include the presence of constant oppression.

The idea of the museum was present within the scenic design as a complement to the other two aspects. From the previously described ideas, we had a large number of Confederate weapons from the Civil War hanging over a dingy apartment with the same layout as the Oval Office of the President of the United States. We realized quickly that our Confederate weapon and Oval Office combo seemed to be something that could be found in a historical art museum. Only one thing was missing. If one would see an exhibit like this, it would typically be surrounded by stanchions (Appendix A.3). The sketches that I provided early on included these stanchions and they provided a suitable border between our brothers and the people we decided were now running the showing at the museum, our docents.

This mixing of ideas concerned me as a designer, I was worried about the different ideas creating a confusing image to the audience. I was very curious as to how it would all come together, but also very excited and determined to make it work. When we finally came down to figuring out how it would look and how to move forward, I was eager to begin drafting the show and working to specify the remaining details. What we eventually ended up with was a beautiful looking production and a great opportunity for our audiences to have a truly unique look at such an important show.

C. Implementation

I created all of the scenic drafting and paint elevations which were reviewed by the Technical Director Weston Wilkerson and our Properties and Paints Supervisor Karl Hermanson. There were not any major changes that had to be made to the design as a whole, but there were two relatively tricky problems to figure out: How do we build such a large curved wall to appear smooth and seamless? How do we acquire and hang nearly eighty guns, swords, and knives safely?

The wall was tricky from the beginning, but as it was one of the few large scenic pieces beyond our flying arsenal and rug, we had time to figure it out. The wall had a significant curve and wanted to be seamless because by the time we began the build we were still considering making the wall transparent (though we cut that idea soon after due to spacing/lighting reasons). After we elected to cut the translucent idea, we were able to settle on large pieces of muslin for the wall, since it would still be seamless and would curve much easier than any wooden sheet goods we could get.

The wall was to have a large cornice piece at the top. This cornice pieces acted as the main structure to the top of the wall. The idea was to create rigging pick points from the top and fly out the wall. We would then come behind the standing wall and add bracing to solidify our fabric wall. As for the cornice, due to its large nature, we acquired large pieces of white foam and proceeded to carve the molding by using plywood carved to the intended silhouette of the molding. We applied sandpaper to the carving side and used this to slow-sand the foam down to our intended shape. Then bendable plywood was then added to the back of the cornice to give it some structure and something for us to create rigging points from.

The fabric was laid out on our mainstage in University Theatre and painted. It had a dark green that had some painted shadow around the outside edges, similar to the first research image Mr. Free shared with me. (Appendix A.1 & F). The cornice and fabric were delivered to the University of Arkansas Black-Box Theatre for assembly. Along with the main pieces of the wall, we sent along a few lengths of lumber, along with some lengths of one-inch tube steel, and a welder to create the bracing for the wall. The wall went up with relative ease. The real trick of getting the wall finished was cutting and bracing the door, which was the only entrance and exit on the stage set (the exception being the characters were led on and off of the stage by one of the docents removing a stanchion rope and guiding them to where they needed to go). Framing took a few days to perfect, and once it was figured out we brought in a bendable base molding to further secure the fabric to the bracing tying together the wall as a whole and completing its build.

Another challenge from my perspective with this production was acquiring and hanging the numerous weapons in the air. The design called for eight distinct weapons, which we duplicated multiple times to fill out the negative space of the air. We had to suspend a total of 81 weapons. We were able to buy various sabers and some of the rifles, which saved us a lot of time when it came to the assembly of the weapons we had to build.

Of the eight weapon types, our purchasing got us through four of the types, leaving four other styles, approximately forty weapons, to be made by hand. Of the eight weapons, our goals included acquiring multiples of U.S. Model 1861 .58 Caliber Rifled Musket, .32 Caliber Colt Navy Revolver, Remington .44 Caliber Army Revolver, Sharp's .52 Caliber Carbine, Officers Light Calvary Sabre, Staff sword for Staff Corps., Bowie Knife, and a Side Fighting Knife. (Appendix A.5-A.7). In moving toward hand making some of the weapons, we faced the fact that

there were a large number of weapons to manufacture on top of securing or making the other props that were needed in the show. We had to invent a simple way to streamline and expedite the process of building so many weapons.

We set up a few jigs and a multi-person assembly line to fabricate the knives. We cut the knife blades out of Masonite and fashioned quick handles out of plywood. After using a mix of techniques to produce the blades and guards (band saw, saber saw, etc.) we fixed these pieces into a wooden hilt that matched for both sets of knives. We then took the blades to the prop shop and a group of craftspeople proceeded to wrap the blades in aluminum tape and smoothed out the tape to attempt to hide any seams. These weapons were produced rather swiftly in this fashion.

Remaining on our "to-be-built" list was one rifle and one pistol style. Karl, the Props Master, carved the rifles himself from lengths of two by four and using some small cuts of metal pipe for the "barrel." He affixed the "barrel" with lengths of gaff and metallic tape to make it appear authentic. He then took all of the currently made pieces and gave them a mix of paint and stain to make them look period and authentic.

For the pistols that were left, we looked for a way to streamline the build process to further expedite the build. I suggested that we 3-D print a few of the pieces that made up the weapons and assemble them upon completion of the printed parts. This could allow multiple activities to occur simultaneously furthering our efficiency. The files that I had made for the scenic package (Appendix G) were in a 3D format already and could, therefore, be scaled and printed over and over. Karl agreed to let us pursue this idea on the cylinder of the revolver due to its more intricate design nature. By 3-D printing some of the more intricate parts of the weapon, we were able to get the detail quickly and not have to worry about having to produce that sort of quality and repeated detail by hand. I went home that night and test printed a chamber to see how

easy it was to affix it to a wooden hilt and paint. The next day we found it successful and rather easy to use this building method. All three graduate scenic design students set our printers to produce these over the next two nights. In a matter of three days, we had 10 pistols that were the correct size and looked fantastic!

The final part of this process was definitely the biggest challenge this production posed to the scenic crew. We had to hang all of these weapons safely and in such a manner that they would not slow down or disrupt any of the other work that was needed to complete the design. Our shop foreman, Matthew Meers, was tasked with attaching each of the weapons with a length of aircraft cable and driving around in our electric lift hanging these weapons. After working diligently he was able to get all of these weapons into the air after about a week and a half.

With the wall and the weapons up, we only had one mildly challenging project to tackle. In the rendering/drafting package (Appendix F & G) there is a large area of carpet surrounded by stanchions. This is well over forty feet of carpeting, and it was meant to be cut in a very specific oval pattern. The stanchions separating the audience and docents from the two main actors would surround the carpet. Therefore, the shape of this carpet really dictated how all of the floor work would work. It was an extremely important and large piece that needed to be figured out.

Our technical director Weston proposed we go to Habitat for Humanity and check out their rolls of carpet. We could cut what we needed and then donate it back to Habitat for Humanity (due to our lack of storage for such large rolls of carpet). After much deliberation between the options that were available locally, we decided to go with a large roll of what seemed to be brand new off-white carpet. As with the rendering, I was looking for something of a more used and brown tone, but with urgings from Weston and Karl, they thought they could

rough up and paint the carpet to work perfectly. We purchased the carpet that day, cut the carpet in an empty warehouse room at Habitat for Humanity and gave them what was remaining.

After returning to the theatre we laid out the carpet and cut it in half so that we could use two sides to reach the horizontal diameter we were looking for, which was larger than the original width of the piece of carpet. We used carpet tape and a carpet stretcher to line up the halves to match as perfectly as we could get them. We drew out and cut the perimeter of the desired oval. We took sprays and paint to the carpet to age and make it appear worn. This technique worked perfectly. From there it was as simple as rolling it up and transporting it to the University of Arkansas Black-box Theatre. We laid out the carpet next to all of our other installed pieces of scenery and carefully carpet-taped it in place.

The final touches that remained were to bring in the final set dressing elements which included: A La-Z-Boy armchair we sprayed down for color, a cot which worked as Booth's bed, six milk crates painted to match each other with green and black paint, our fake greenery that were in various stages of health, and our numerous stanchions to act as the final piece to the build and the beginning of the run of the show.

IV. Reflection

Topdog/Underdog is a complex play composed of words and characters whose actions highlight themes. Throughout the design process, I was worried about how the audience would perceive and understand a show that had so many thematic and visual layers. Concepts explored by the scenic design alone included: Greek Mythology, The Civil War, institutional racism, a performance museum, and wilting plants versus wilting lives. The volume of concepts of the

scenic design plus the elements that were included in the sound, costume, and lighting design, put together a production that gave the audience a lot to sort through.

As a designer, having the opportunity to explore so many unique concepts was incredibly rewarding. Mr. Free and my fellow designers also seemed to have a great time figuring out the intricacies of this production. We were sure that the audience would find these elements intriguing, but what would they take away from the show? Wondering about the audience reaction through the process, I was extremely anxious to see what the audiences thought about the final result. I attended four different performances with the sole intent of listening to the various audience members' interpretations regarding both the design and performance.

A. Audience Reaction

I think that the best way to gauge how a production went is by weighing the opinions of the people that the production was put on for, the audience. I attended four performances of our production of *Topdog/Underdog* in order to hear what various members of the audience would say about the concepts that were incorporated into the design of the show. Before each performance started, I listened to people talking about the weapons dangling from the ceiling. In nearly every conversation, all of them seemed to recognize that the weaponry was from the civil war. Many referring to the daunting mobile as being "scary" or "a lot". They also would note the shape of the upstage wall and the coloring of the wall.

The docents' stations that were set up in the lobby and how they related to the scenic design, also found their way into the preshow discussions that I overheard. The stanchions were also noted quickly by some audience members, and many of the audience members believed this to be another exhibit in the "museum" or the "main attraction" because of the stanchions. The

stanchions were a very successful portion of the design, and they were recognized immediately for their significance in portraying the productions museum concept. On two occasions, I heard some audience members refer to this as what they suspected to be one of the characters' consciousness or a physical representation of one of the character's inner minds. Without yet being introduced to Lincoln and Booth, I found this an extremely interesting idea since they had no indication of the two characters at all.

During the intermissions, the conversations covered various abstract concepts and ideas of what the various design disciplines were trying to achieve. As soon as the dialogue ceased on stage, people would start combing back through the dialogue trying to connect some of the phrases they picked out to different aspects of the set. This thrilled me to no end each time I heard it brought up. In most of the shows I've ever attended, I have not heard many conversations of this form. People understood that the set was not just a performance taking place in a museum, but it still was not your everyday play production.

The conversations about the set seemed align largely in two distinct groups. One group seemed to have given up trying to understand what they were looking at. This is the negative side of the coin, but they would give up and seem to try and focus specifically on the dialogue between Booth and Lincoln and do their best to block out some of the action of the docents. Without any actual dialogue, and with the purpose of the docents being vague, it seemed reasonable that some audience members might struggle to grasp the concept of the added docents immediately. The script is so eloquently written that it is a very easy play for an audience to just sit and listen. This served the abstract concept of the docents since in the event an audience member could not truly figure out their role, they could still find ways to enjoy the play.

The second group tried fiercely to visualize mentally a way to work the additional characters (docents) into the world of the play. This generates an incorrect response due to our (the designers and director) intention that the docents represent aspects of another world. However, one conversation I heard fascinated me and seemed to fit in with all the parameters of the script and production design. A young couple discussed the idea that each docent is a part of Lincoln's subconscious. Meaning, everything that is occurring inside Lincoln's head is represented through the docents. This seemed to be a continuation of a previous conversation the couple had when they walked into the room, and one that a few people had at the fourth showing I viewed. The idea they had was that each docent is a regret that Lincoln feels throughout his life. The weapons are the dangers of the outside world and the docents are the dangers of the inside.

After the final line of the play was delivered and the lights are dimmed, the creative team decided there would be no curtain call. The audience did not seem to be impacted negatively by the lack of a curtain call. In fact, they seemed to rush out quickly and be mostly unphased at the lack of the curtain call. The only real conversation of note after the show was of the same young couple I listened to in the second showing. I tried to hear what their final-conclusion was as they were leaving. They held true to their thoughts at intermission but seemed to shift to adapt to Lincoln's death at the end of the play. What they were saying was that the docents were still regrets from his life but felt that Lincoln was dead and trapped within his head the whole time. This made his world a sort of hell that forced him to relive his death and some of the key moments leading to his death over and over, this idea is extremely similar to Mr. Free's intention of having the exhibit of the museum set up again as if the demonstrations was starting over.

I find that the various ideas I heard at these performances were an interesting look at ways perception can differ between people. As much as I wanted to get across the ideas we came

up with, we are all victims of our own perception when it comes to art. Getting a chance to do a show that had experimental aspects was fascinating and getting the chance to hear some of the stories that some of the audience members would put toward the different design aspects and play as a whole was very enlightening.

B. Personal Thoughts

Overall, this was perhaps one of my favorite design processes of which I have been associated. The design team was awesome to work with, the director was amazing, and as always, the people working with me in the shop were spectacular. This show for me was a shining example of how shows should run from top to bottom.

This show brought me some interesting clarity later that semester at the 2019 USITT conference. I was in a workshop for theatre sustainability, and I brought up 3D printing as a point of eco-driven prop making that PLA plastic is biodegradable and breaks down faster than a lot of the materials we use more often in theatre. This led to a very interesting discussion about 3D printing with some other attendees of the workshop. In saying this I credit this production of *Topdog/Underdog* with helping orient my thinking toward more eco-friendly and sustainable aspects of scenery for theatre.

Having the chance to get to work with Kevin Free as a director was incredibly important to my growth as a designer, collaborator, and artist. It was an honor to work with a guest director and have the experience of working with a director from outside of the department. Mr. Free was not afraid to take risks in this production, and though I may not feel every aspect of the show hit its mark, I do feel like this production was worthwhile. Mr. Free has remained a close contact and friend to me. He has helped me with professional advice within and outside of the theatre world, and that would not have been possible without getting to work with him on this show.

I love the script to this show. My portfolio is filled with plays that are charged with either political or ethical meanings. As a play, this fits right in with some of the other shows I've done. Now that time has passed I believe that simplifying some of the parts of the production would have better served the show to some extent. As a designer, I love to reach for the stars when it comes to heady concepts or metaphors. This production showed me that there is a limit, and sometimes the design really just needs to be enough to let the story be told. As I explore this notion further, I continue to ask myself a few questions: Could the show have benefited from dropping one of the three main scenic ideas that led to specific elements: stanchions (museum), weapons (Civil War), Oval Office (oppressive political power) ground plan? Could the play have been served better using only the two characters described in the script? Due to the nature of theatre and the differing perceptions of a variable audience, it is hard to tell if losing any one or two design ideas would have more effectively served the play.

My best attempt to answer this question is that by having two of the three main scenic elements in the final design, it might have garnered better results in the analyses of the audience. The less there is to visually decipher the meaning, the easier it is to actually understand the themes expressed in the story. Maybe omitting the hanging weapons and only having the museum aspects and the Oval Office ground plan could have helped land the docents better by allowing the audience to focus more on those aspects, or if the stanchions and docents were removed and the audience had to watch the show without a barrier between them and the action could have heightened the on-stage tension of the characters as well as the off-stage tension of the audience. Having said that, some of the responses I heard, in regards to our production that did contain all three ideas, were fantastic in nature even if they were not the original intent the design team was looking to achieve. So many good ideas seemed to flow from the people who

tried to assign something to the various aspects and getting to witness that this alone made this entire process worth it.

Though I am not personally sure if the play itself was well received. I do know that it will be a long time until I get the chance to have such a rewarding and stress-free process as I had with *Topdog/Underdog*. This show has a strong message that Suzan-Lori Parks has worked to get across throughout the entirety of her career. Her biggest successes as a playwright seem to come directly from the writing of this play, and I think that no matter how the show was perceived we honored her message. We made our audience stop and think about the show and the problems it addresses. In theatre with a message that is the most important thing, we can achieve.

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VI. Appendices

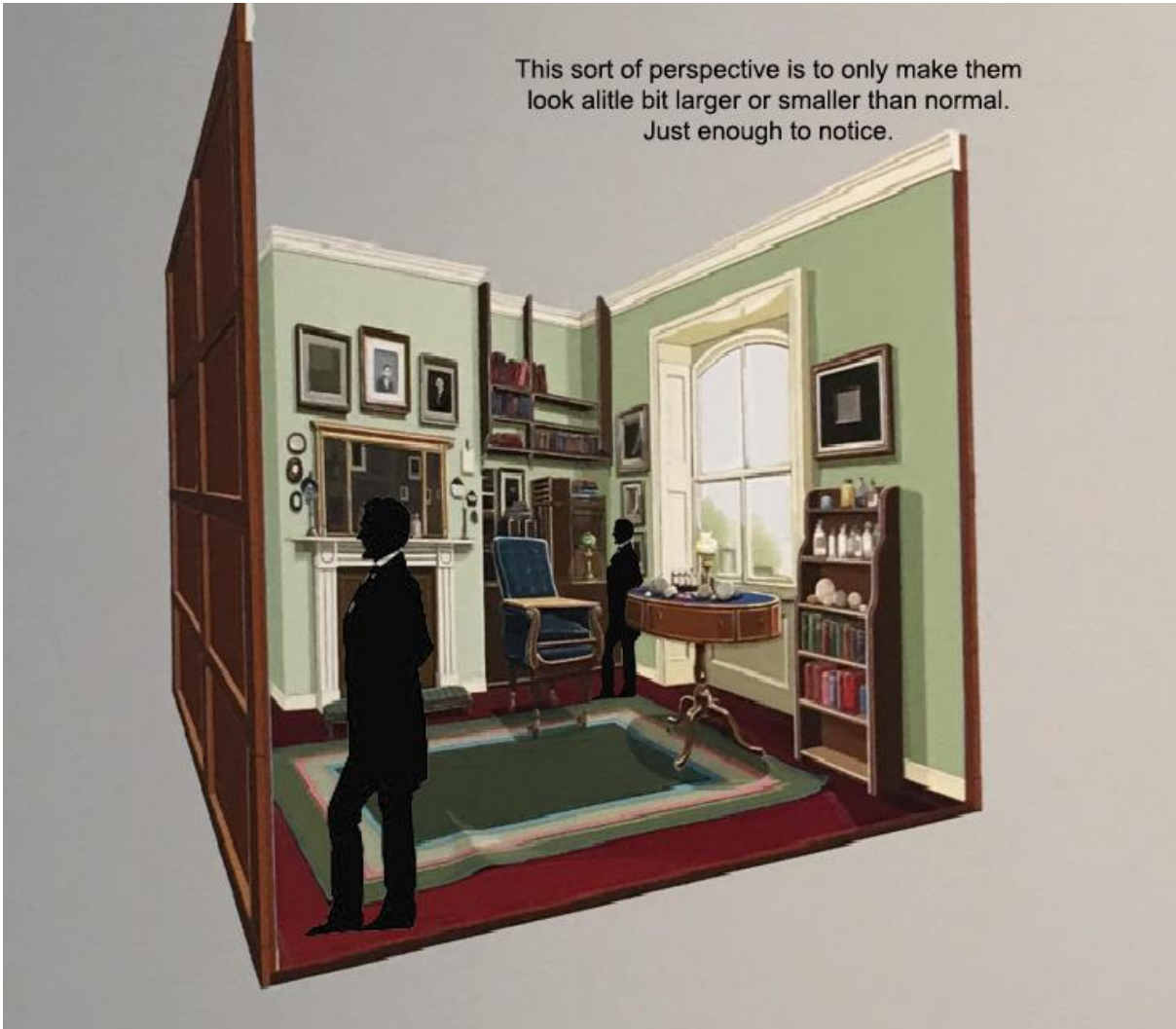
A. Research Images



A.1

“The Father of Evolution: The Old Study of Charles Darwin” by Julie Roberts

This sort of perspective is to only make them
look a little bit larger or smaller than normal.
Just enough to notice.



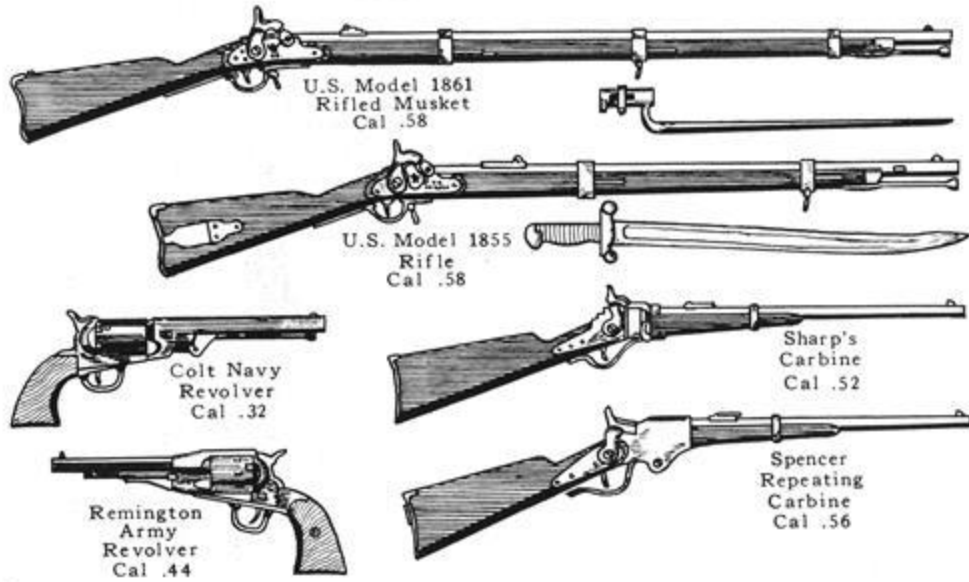
A.2

Adjusted Painting for Perspective
Adjusted by: Austin Aschbrenner



A.3
Museum Exhibit Inspiration
heritagesquare.org

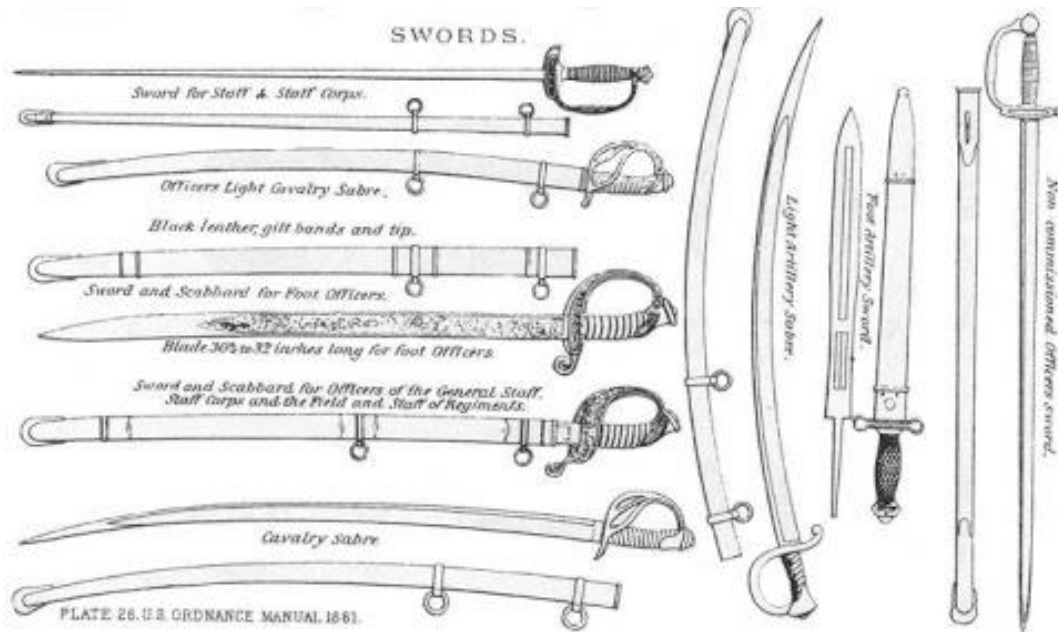
CIVIL WAR SMALL ARMS



A.4

Research Images for Confederate Rifles and Revolvers

<https://padresteve.com/tag/claude-minie/>



A.5
 Research Images for Confederate Swords
<https://www.historyhunts.com/finds--news/page/3>

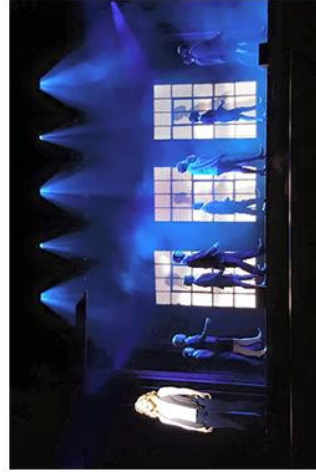
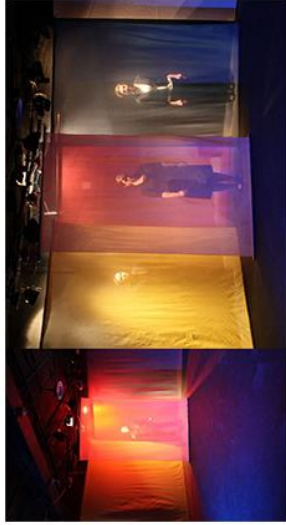


A.6
Research Image Hunters Knife
Gunsandmilitarycollectibles.com

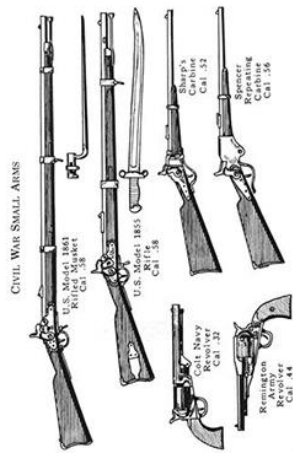
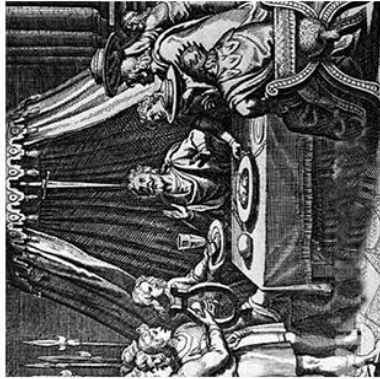


A.7

Research Image Bowie Knife
<https://sellantiquearms.com/shop/confederate-bowie-knife/>



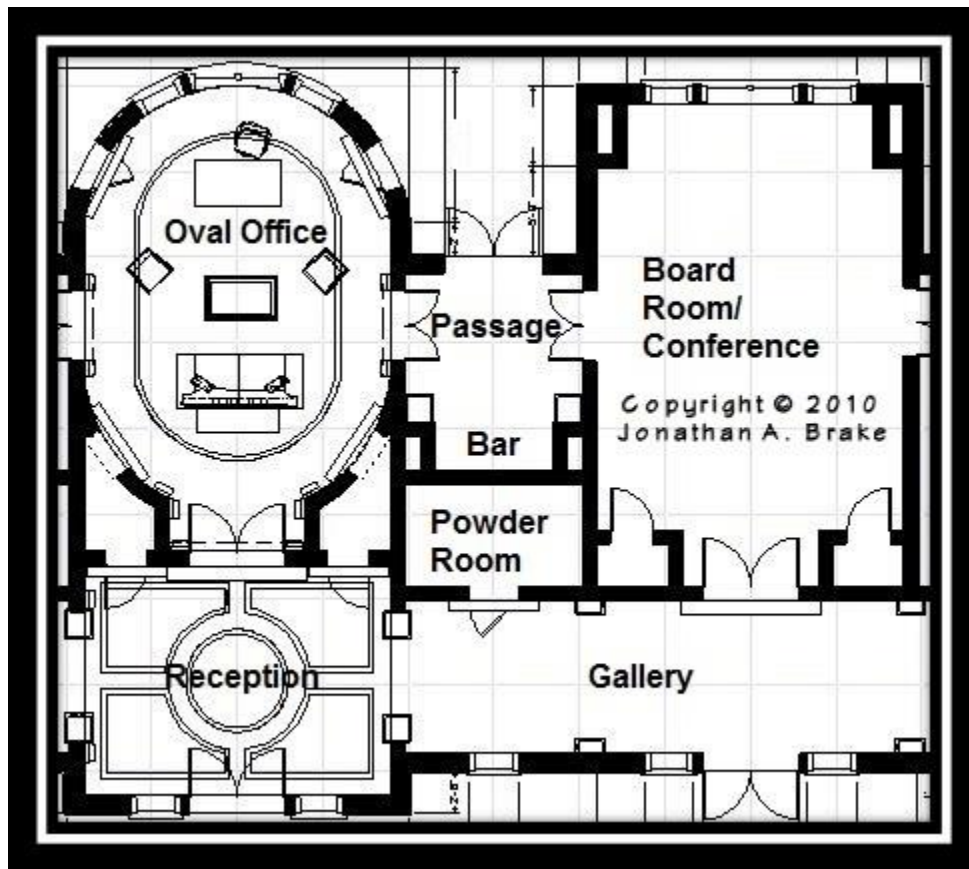
A.8
 Research Image Board 1
 Pictures by: Getty Images, Austin Aschbrenner,
 Specialtycurtains.com



A.9
 Research Image Board 2
 Photos by: Getty Images & histroyhunts.com



A.10
Research Image Board 3
Pictures by: Cheatsheet.com and
Hiddenremote.com



A.11

White House-West Wing First Floor
Ground Plan

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/420734790159188743/?nic_v1=1ar8fw0TUPpr5iXlapVR5PoVtGoRtwrfffXUFea0YkUgtjBYvwyTtSaAq94ZSMVIFq

B. Scenographic Breakdown

Scenographic Breakdown

Topdog Underdog

Austin Aschbrenner

Scene I for *Topdog Underdog* by Suzan-Lori Parks

When:

Period:

Season: Winter

Time (and Time of Day): Thursday Night

Where:

Locale:

Location: Booth's Apartment

Who:

Characters: Booth, Lincoln

What:

Action: Booth Practices 3-Card Monte-. Lincoln enters dressed as Honest Abe. He startles booth who pulls out a gun out of fright. Lincoln points out his new job and that he tricked a kid to give him 20 bucks. Booth talks about how he stole a ring and is going to purpose to his "girlfriend" Grace with it. The eat dinner on a table setup from milk crates. Booth tries to convince Lincoln to help him get better and even team up with him at 3 card Monte. Lincoln refuses saying that booth needs more practice. We also find out that both of them at one time received an Inheritance. Booth has hoarded his whereas Lincoln spent his. They speak of the day their mother left. Lincoln points out that when their father was drunk he told Lincoln that their names are what they are as a joke.

Specific Scenic Needs: Bed, Reclining Chair, Small Wooden Chair, 2 milk crates, Guitar, Pile of girly magazines under booths bed

Props: 3 Playing Cards, and the cardboard playing board, Gun, Take out food (Chinese in foam containers, cans of soda, and fortune cookies)

Why:

Important Quotations:

"I was thinking we don't got no bookshelves we don't got no dining room table so I'm making a sorta modular unit you can put the books in the bottom and the table top on top. We can eat and store our books. We could put the photo album in there." - Booth

Additional Notes:

Scene II

When:

Period:

Season: Winter

Time (and Time of Day): Friday-Night

Where:

Locale:

Location: Booth's Apartment

B.1

Scenographic Breakdown: Page 1

Written by: Austin Aschbrenner

Who:**Characters:** Booth, Lincoln**What:**

Action: Booth stole a bunch of items for him and Lincoln including a brand new suit for both of them. Booth talks about how Grace will ask him to marry her when she see's the suit. Booth passes out the cash for the budget for the week. Booth wants to get a phone. Lincoln has a stalker guy at work. Booth heads out to see Graces saying that he will help Lincoln practice his dying for his job when he gets back. Lincoln wants to practice at the suggestion of Booth due to the fact that they are talking about making cutbacks at work.

Specific Scenic Needs: Folding Screen,**Props:** Magazine, Bottle of Whiskey and 2 glasses, Shopping bag (Lincoln's Clothes)**Why:****Important Quotations:****Additional Notes:****Scene III****When:****Period:****Season:** Winter**Time (and Time of Day):** Later that night**Where:****Locale:****Location:** Booth's Apartment**Who:****Characters:** Booth, Lincoln**What:**

Action: Booth returns claiming to have slept with Grace with no condom. Lincoln ends up getting it out of him that he did neither. Booth fiddles with a box of condoms. Lincoln offers to hook booth up with his old 3card connections. Booth asks if Lincoln ever looks at the people that shoot him. Lincoln reveals that he can sometimes watch them in a reflective fuse box. Lincoln practices dying with Booth.

Specific Scenic Needs: Same as Scene II**Props:** Condoms, Blanket, Girly Mags under Booth's bed.**Why:****Important Quotations:****Additional Notes:****Scene IV****When:****Period:**

B.2
 Scenographic Breakdown: Page 2
 Written by: Austin Aschbrenner

Season: Winter

Time (and Time of Day): Saturday – Just before Dawn

Where:

Locale:

Location: Booth's Apartment

Who:

Characters: Booth, Lincoln

What:

Action: While booth is sleeping, Lincoln wakes and pissed in a cup. He then thinks about quitting his job and hustling again. He reminisces about hustling. Booth wakes up and listens intently to his brother practicing 3card.

Specific Scenic Needs:

Props: Plastic Cup, Cards,

Why:

Important Quotations:

Additional Notes:

Scene V

When:

Period:

Season:

Time (and Time of Day): Wednesday Night (5 days later)

Where:

Locale:

Location: Booth's Apartment

Who:

Characters: Booth, Lincoln

What:

Action: Booth has the place done up for a dinner for 2 with Grace. Lincoln appears and claims to have lost his job and is thinking about asking to keep it with a pay cut. Booth reveals that Grace is late and Lincoln finds out that she is 6 hours late. They talk of their inheritance and their parents. Each parent gave one kid 500 bucks and then left. Booth claims that he will do that to his future kids. Lincoln offers to show Booth a few moves in 3card. After they exchange tricks Lincoln points out that Booth really has to keep practicing.

Specific Scenic Needs: Monte setup is gone, table cloth, 2 nice chairs, Daily on the recliner

Props: Plates, silverware, champagne glasses, candles

Why:

Important Quotations:

B.3
Scenographic Breakdown: Page 3
Written by: Austin Aschbrenner

Additional Notes:**Scene VI****When:****Period:****Season:** Winter**Time (and Time of Day):** Thursday Night**Where:****Locale:****Location:** Booth's Apartment**Who:****Characters:** Booth, Lincoln**What:**

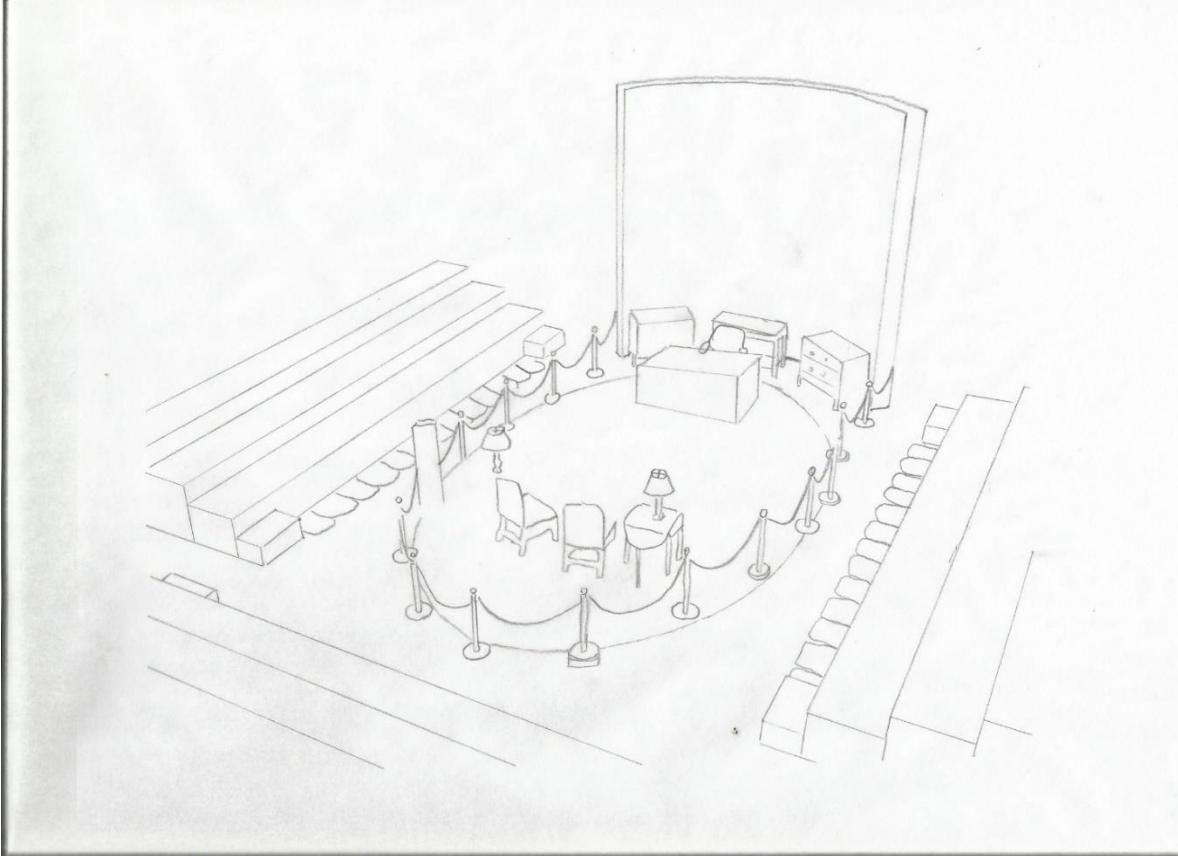
Action: Lincoln comes in drunk. He reveals that he went and played 3card and made a lot of money that day. Booth has been there the whole time and has been hiding. Booth claims that Grace got on her knees and asked him to marry her. Booth tells Lincoln that Grace will be moving in and he needs to move out. Lincoln has no problem with this and starts to pack to move out. They talk about how their parents both had people on the side. Booth reveals that he slept with Cookie (Lincoln's wife). They get into it abit and challenge each other over 3card. Booth reveals he knows that Lincoln was throwing on the street earlier that day. Booth suggest that they play again for cash. Lincoln puts down 500 bucks he made earlier that day. Booth puts in his inheritance money. When they finally play booth chooses the wrong card. As Lincoln is working to get the money out of the stocking Booth reveals that he shot Grace 3 Times. Lincoln tries to give the money back but booth wont take it. He tells Lincoln to open it and as he does he shoots Lincoln in the neck.

Specific Scenic Needs:**Props:** Money, Suitcase, Camera, Money in a nylon stocking, Knife, Gun**Why:****Important Quotations:****Additional Notes:****B.4**

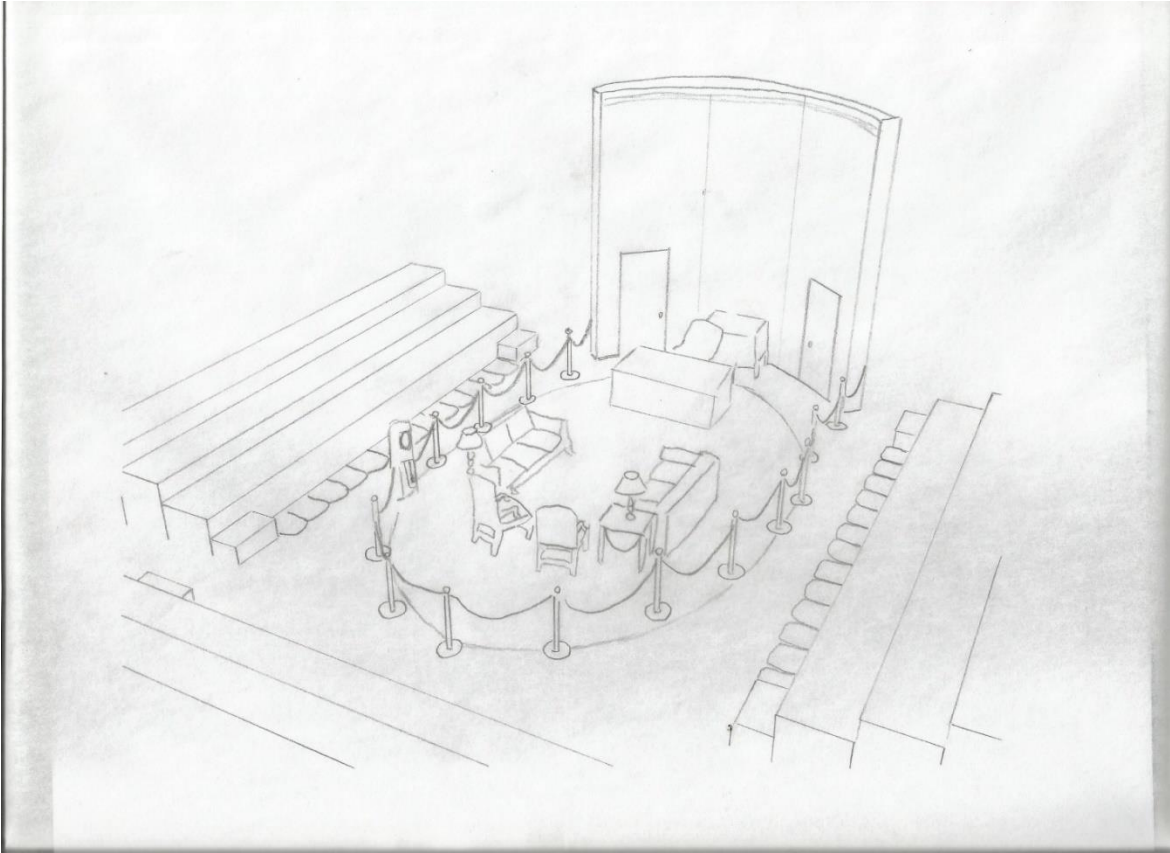
Scenographic Breakdown: Page 4

Written by: Austin Aschbrenner

C. Early Sketches

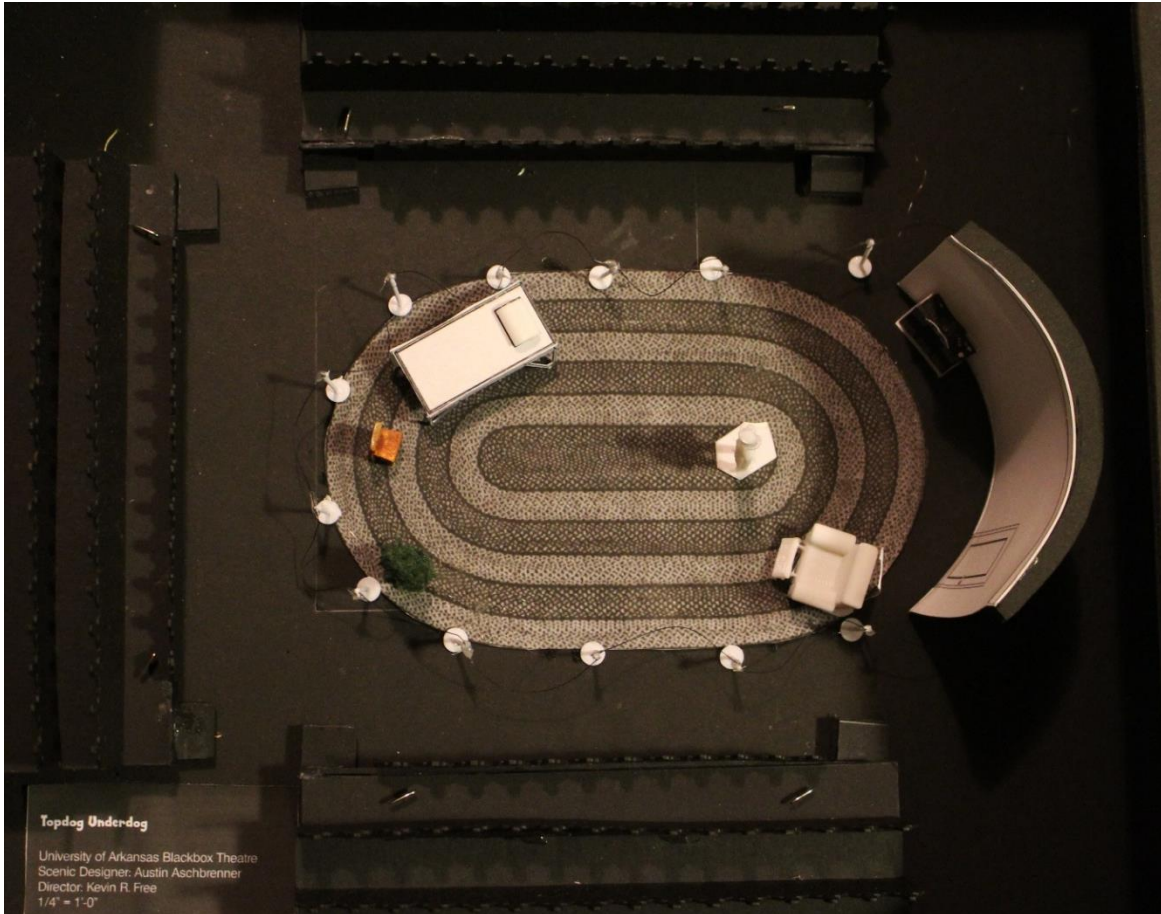


C.1
Early Concept Sketch 1.0
Sketch by: Austin Aschbrenner

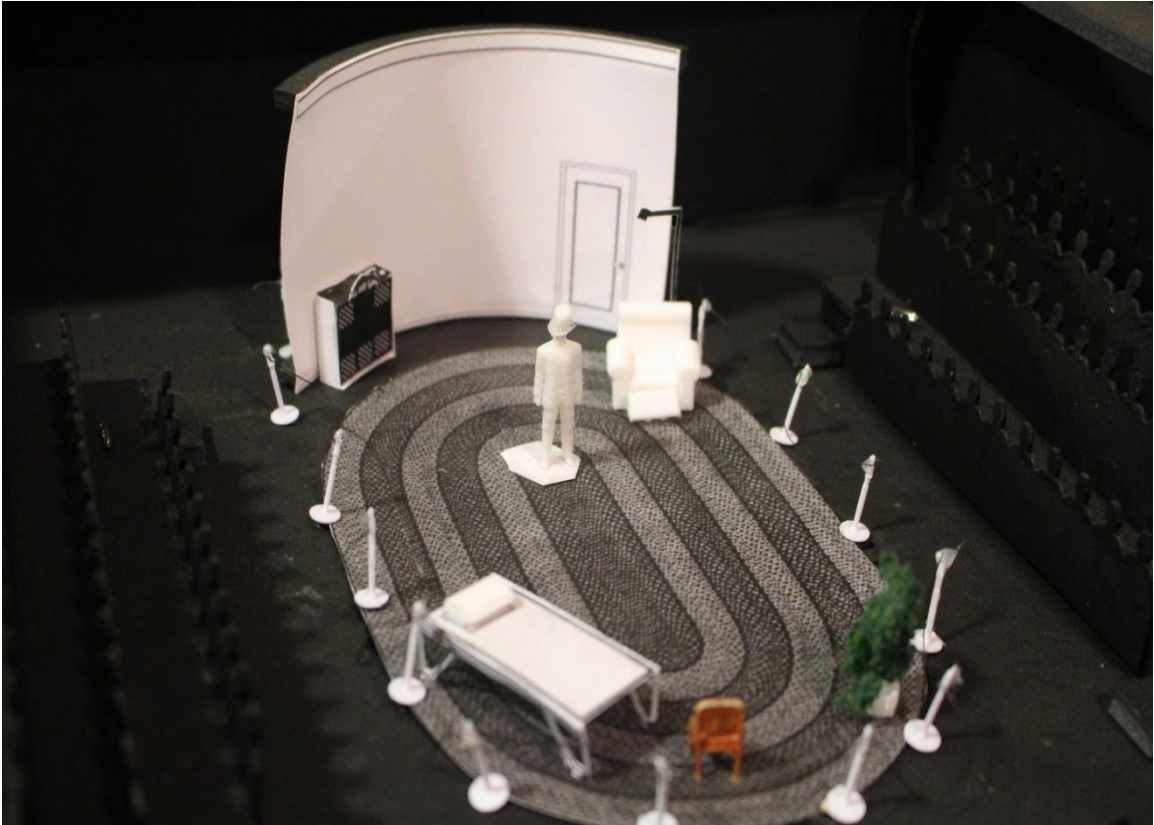


C.2
Early Concept Sketch 2.0
Sketch by: Austin Aschbrenner

D. White Model

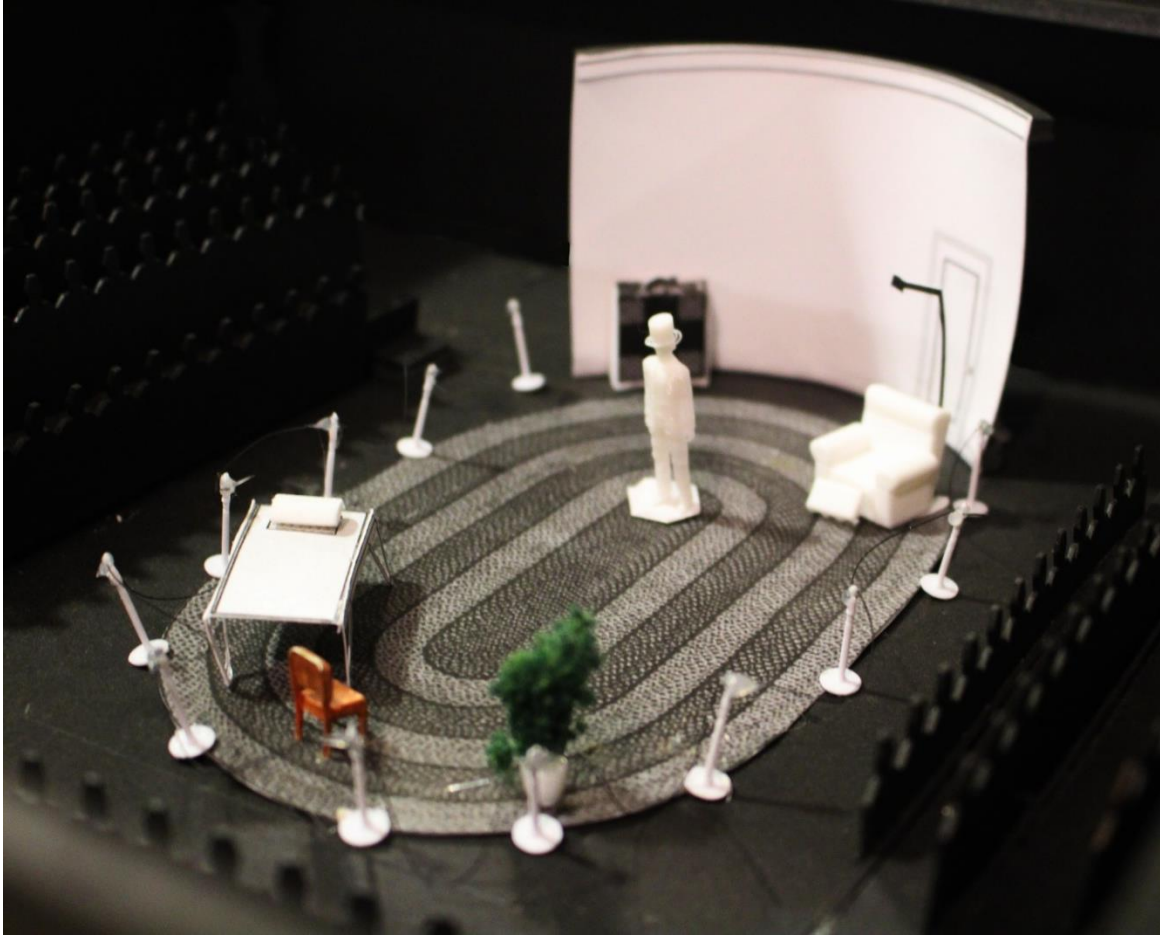


D.1
White Model: Top Down (No Grid)
Built and Picture by: Austin Aschbrenner



D.2

White Model: DS-SR Vom (No Grid)
Built and Picture by: Austin Aschbrenner



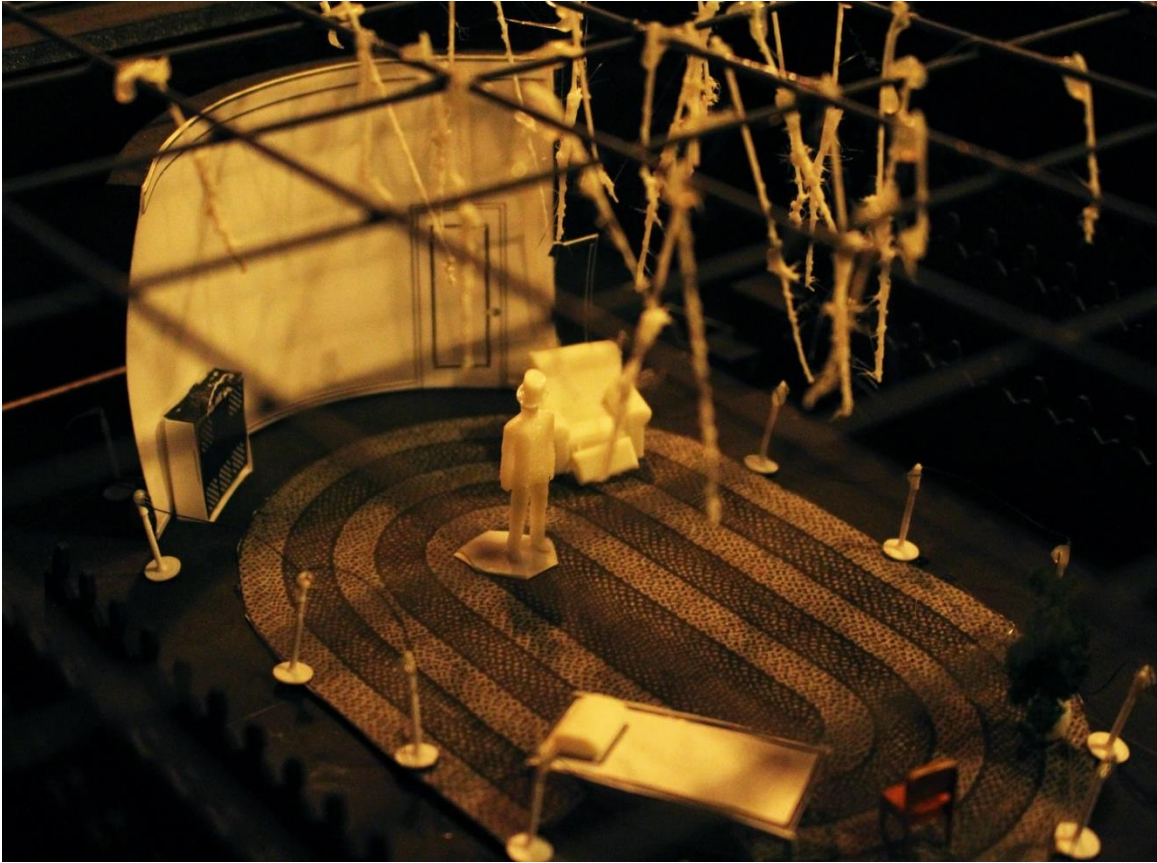
D.3

White Model: DS-SL Vom (No Grid)
Built and Picture by: Austin Aschbrenner



D.4

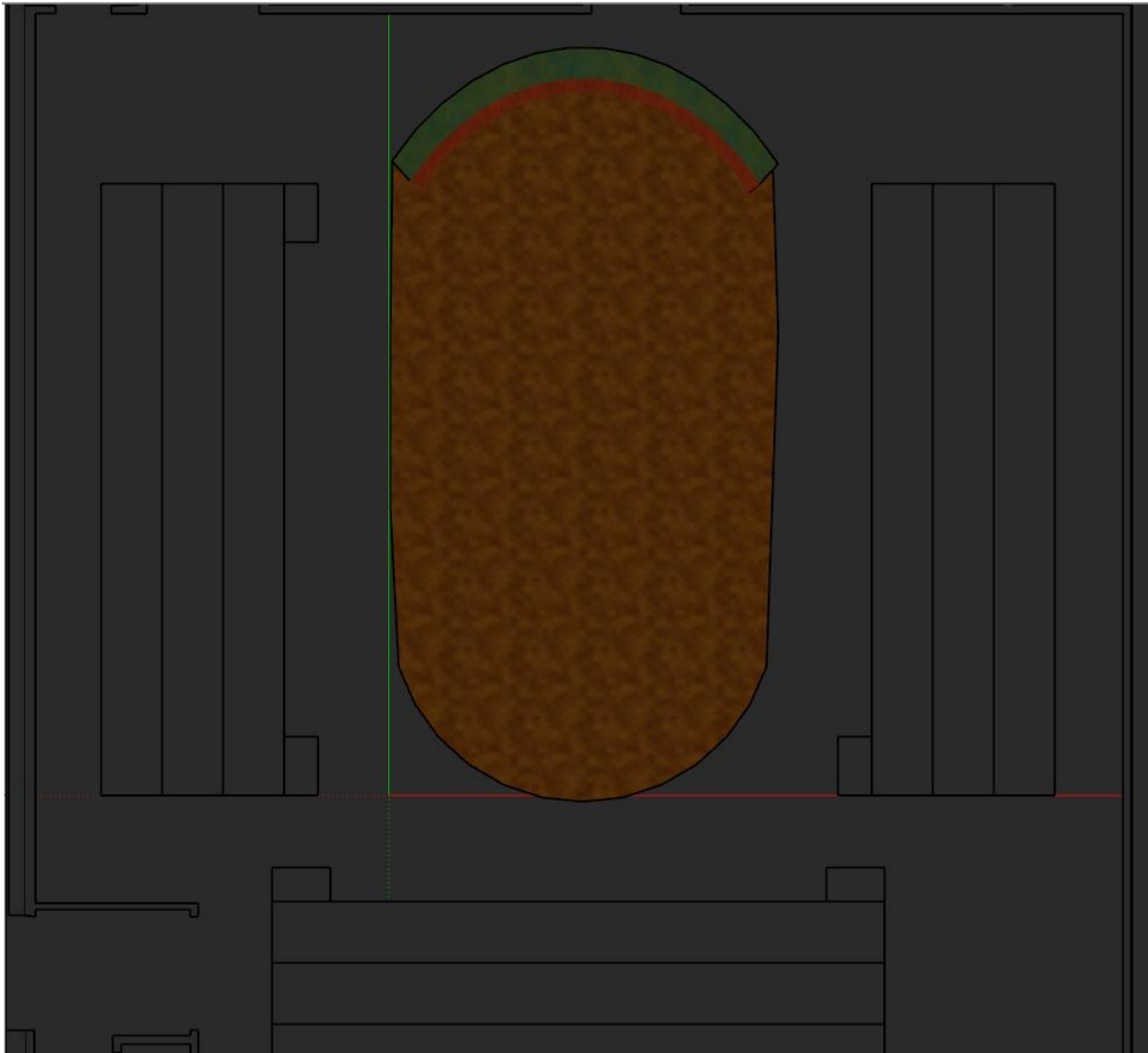
White Model: DS-SL Vom (Grid)
Built and Picture by: Austin Aschbrenner



D.5

White Model: DS-SR (Grid)
Built and Picture by: Austin Aschbrenner

E. Digital 3-D Model



E.1
3-D Model Top Down View
Digitally Constructed by: Austin Aschbrenner



E.2
3-D Model DS-SR View
Digitally Constructed by: Austin Aschbrenner


F. Digital Rendering




F
Digital Rendering
Rendered by: Austin Aschbrenner

G. Final Drafting Packet


The image contains two architectural drawings for a stage set. The top drawing is a groundplan showing a semi-circular stage area. It includes a door on the left, a 'Milk Grates & Potted Plant' area, 'Lincoln's Chair', a 'Booth's Cot', a 'Chair', and a 'Window Plant'. The bottom drawing is a centerline section showing a person standing on the stage, a bicycle, a potted plant, and a staircase on the right. The background features a wall with various hanging items.

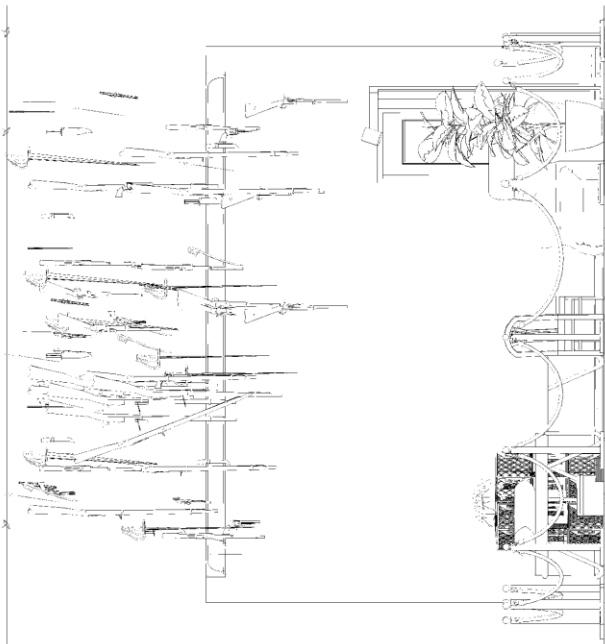
	Title: Topdog Underdog author: Suzan-Lori Parks		plate name: Groundplan and Centerline Section	plate no. 1 of: 6
	scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"		date: 10/26/2018	

G.1
 Drafting Packet Page 1
 Created by: Austin Aschbrenner

	Topdog Underdog author: Suzan-Lori Parks	plate name: Overhead Schedule scale: 1/2" = 1'-0" date: 10/26/2018	Scenic Designer: Austin Aschbrenner University of Arkansas Black Box Theatre Director: Kevin R. Free University of Arkansas	plate no. 2 of 6
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G.2
 Drafting Packet Page 2
 Created by: Austin Aschbrenner

	<p>title: Topdog Underdog author: Suzan-Lori Parks</p>	<p>plate name: Composite Elevation scale: 1" = 1'-0" date: 10/26/2018</p>	<p>Scenic Designer: Austin Aschbrenner University of Arkansas Black Box Theatre Director: Kevin R. Free University of Arkansas</p>	<p>plate no. 3 of 6</p>
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G.3
Drafting Packet Page 3
Created by: Austin Aschbrenner

The Wall
Scale: 1" = 1'0"

Top View
3'-2 1/4"
3'-2 1/4"

Front View
6'-10 3/8"
3'-2 1/4"

Crown Molding
Scale: 3" = 1'-0"


Base Molding
Scale: Full Size

Door
Scale: 1" = 1'0"

The wall is meant to seg with the plants on stage.

16'-10 9/32"
12'-4 3/8"
15'-3 31/64"

16'-10 9/32"
12'-4 3/8"
15'-3 31/64"

	title: Topdog Underdog author: Suzan-Lori Parks	plate name: Wall Elevations and Molding scale: Various Scales date: 10/26/2018	Scenic Designer: Austin Aschbrenner University of Arkansas Arkansas Little Rock Theatre Arkansas Little Rock University of Arkansas	plate no. 4 of 6

G.4
 Drafting Packet Page 4
 Created by: Austin Aschbrenner

Working Light

Rope
<https://www.epicrowdcontrol.com/1-5-velour-stanchion-rope.html>

Need 13
<https://www.webrestaurantstore.com/lancaster-table-seating-silver-40-crown-top-rope-style-crowd-control-guidance-stanchion/164CRSS.html>

Black and Green Milk Crates

Cot From Stock

Lay - Z - Boy From Stock

plate name: **Topdog Underdog**

Scenic Specifications

scale: 1" = 1'-0"

date: 10/26/2018

Scenic Designer: Austin Aschbrenner
 University of Arkansas Black Box Theatre
 Director: Kevin R. Free
 University of Arkansas

plate no. **5**
 of 6

G.5
 Drafting Packet Page 5
 Created by: Austin Aschbrenner



Need 12



Need 11



Need 8



Need 8

Guns
Scale: 3" = 1'0"



Need 8



Need 8



Need 8



Need 8

Blades
Scale: 3" = 1'0"



Title: **Topdog Underdog**

author: Suzan-Lori Parks

plate name:

Weapons

scale: 3" = 1'-0"

date: 10/26/2018

Scenic Designer: Austin Aschbrenner
University of Arkansas Black Box Theatre
Director: Kevin R. Free
University of Arkansas

plate no. **6**
of. 6

H. Paint Elevation



H
Paint Elevation-US Wall
Created by: Austin Aschbrenner

I. Production Photos



I.1
Empty Stage
Photo by: Austin Aschbrenner



I.2
Booth and Lincoln
Photo by: Austin Aschbrenner



I.3
Lincoln and Docents
Photo by: Austin Aschbrenner



I.4
Docents and Weapons
Photo by: Austin Aschbrenner



I.5
Lincoln's Death
Photo by: Austin Aschbrenner