

Charlotte's web

Scene Design by Karisa Meier
National Award Winner in Scene Design
KCACTF Region 5 Festival 54

Directed by Drew Schmidt Dramatized by Joseph Robinette

design statement:

All aspects of this children's show sought to draw in the eyes and imaginations of the thousands of kids that graced our seats. From the arena seating arrangement to giant sparkling spiderwebs in each vomitorium, I wanted to create an IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE for the audience that enveloped them in the PLAYFULNESS of talking animals and the REALISM of a quaint, but messy little farm.

concept: childlike wonder & whimsy

This was found in ABSTRACT, ARCHITECTURAL SHAPES that allowed the action to be seen from all four audiences. Eventually, I decided that there would be NO RIGHT ANGLES on any set pieces (or at least as few as was structurally possible) to embrace the ECCENTRIC in shape and line. I also PLAYED WITH SCALE since our animals were human sized to make the webs larger than life.

By the end of the process, the whole design appeared like AN ART PROJECT a child would have made to represent Charlotte's Web which fit our rendition of the show perfectly.

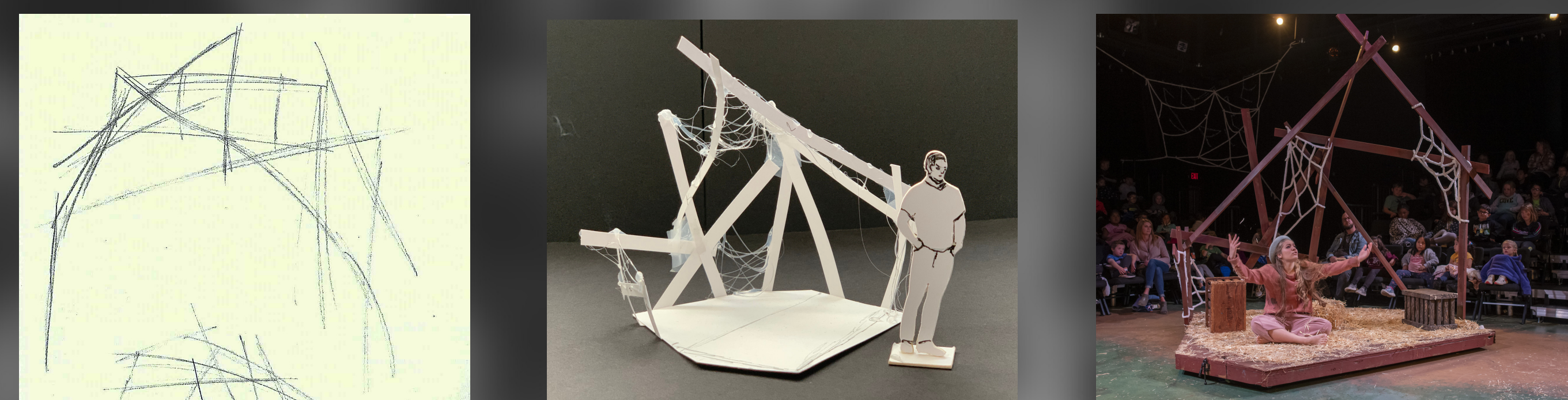
image research



With only four weeks to design and realize all of the set pieces, I had time to make just a few bold choices then stick with what worked to fill in the blanks.

the barn

I was inspired by the architectural shapes of barn rafters which maintained the space necessary for sightlines. And the lack of right angles supported the whimsy we were going for.



the fair

The fair platform draws from the height of bandstand risers, the iconic spirals of a ferris wheel, and the pennants on a carousel.



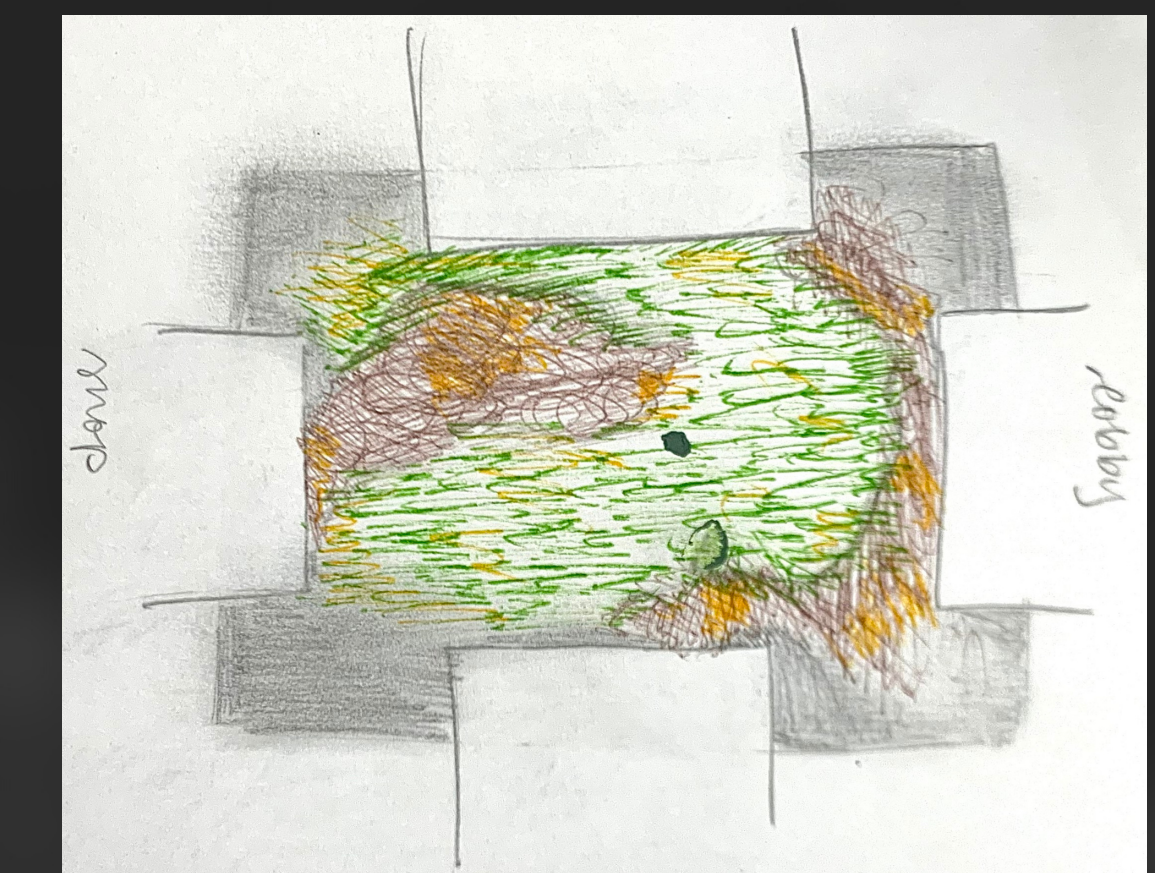
the webs

I chose yarn and string with lots of sparkle to call toward Charlotte's supernatural weaving skills and the shimmer of water droplets on real webs.



the floor

Painting the floor grounded the design in the environment. Organic shapes of grass and dirt that spilled out into the vomns served to pull in all the corners of the space.



in closing

After participating in this production, I know now that scene design is more than providing the actors with the pieces with which they interact but is part of creating the story's whole world. The balance of fantasy and realism in design harmonized with the story's wisdom and the playfulness of its characters to represent the little universe into which we invited the audience. Through a bit of trial and error, I also learned that many other moving parts depend on the scenic designer to provide a ballpark at the beginning of the process so that all aspects can better fit together and become cohesive.