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The Skin of Our Teeth: Setting the Scene

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THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH: SETTING THE SCENE

by

Michaela Lynne Stein

A THESIS

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THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH: SETTING THE SCENE, 2015

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University of Nebraska, 2015

Advisor: JD. Madsen

This thesis is the culmination of the scenic design for the play, *The Skin of Our Teeth* by Thornton Wilder, performed in the Howell Memorial Theatre during the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film's 2014-2015 University Theatre season.

Virginia Smith directed *The Skin of Our Teeth*, leading a creative team comprised of both graduate and undergraduate students. This thesis contains the entire scenic design process including initial meetings, conceptualization, renderings, paperwork, the tech process, and production photographs.

**For Paul Bridgeman,
Thank you for keeping me afloat.**

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I will discuss the entire process for the scenic design for the 1943 Pulitzer Prize-winning play *The Skin of Our Teeth* by Thornton Wilder. This show ran the weeks of March 2 and 9, 2015, in the Howell Memorial Theatre in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. This production represented the culmination of my education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I fulfilled this design under the guidance of Assistant Professor of Scenic Design JD Madsen.

Production meetings for *The Skin of Our Teeth* began in September 2014 with meetings between the director, Virginia Smith, and me. Smith wanted to meet just the two of us to start discussing the script and the intention of the author. Smith and I started discussions on what we really thought the core of the play was, both of us bringing different ideas to the table. We explored the topics of survival, family, resilience, and time. The theme of survival became prevalent since each act depicts different life threatening events, ice age, flooding, and war. The family is at the core of each act, braving these elements together. The family represents mankind and the resilience of the human spirit is what gets them through the action. No matter which time period the action is set in, the outcome is always the same, Wilder explores the fact that time is fleeting and that each life cycle has the same results and that the human race will continue to carry on. Each of these themes materialized throughout the scenic design process, since we discussed them at length. Various versions of the design focus on each of these themes, finally settling on the family being the core of the action. They each affected the use of the design principles and the formation of the scenic elements.

CHAPTER 1: PRE-PRODUCTION

Wilder's thesis behind *The Skin of Our Teeth* is that nothing changes in our lives. Humans are always on the brink of extinction, no matter the time period, yet we always manage to survive. Mankind repeats a vicious cycle throughout its history, a cycle that continually returns again. Wilder exemplifies this repetition process through his circular writing style and ending the play just as it began, with the main characters repeating their dialogue and actions. Each person in the show is an archetype, who achieves neither progress nor transformation throughout the action of the play. This bold gesture in writing style supports our theory that humans will always be the same. The Antrobuses, whose name roughly translates from *anthropus* (meaning "man") in Greek, face an impending Ice Age, flood, and Great War. Achieving these catastrophes onstage would be quite a feat in a literal sense, but being able to express the essence of those catastrophes was the key to our production.

Initial meetings with Smith resulted in talking about all these ideas, yet she did not have a firm concept of what she wanted to express or which theme she wanted at the core of our production. This made the design process lengthy and challenging, without a solidified concept I had to do a lot of guesswork to try and realize her vision. Smith opened my eyes to the statement that "Wilder was Brecht before Brecht." The German playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), however, became well known for his anti-realist approach in 1926 with his *Man Equals Man*. Wilder himself acknowledged his debts both to Brecht and German Expressionism of the 1920s when he exceeded his predecessors by breaking the

“fourth wall” convention in scenography. Wilder in this play breaks all the walls, abandoning his previous sentimentalism (so pervasive in his 1938 drama *Our Town*), and embracing all manner of theatricalized qualities in *The Skin of Our Teeth*. He breaks the fourth wall, has walls fall apart, and has the actors not only play the characters, but also act as a performance troupe putting on the play.

Wilder furthermore adopts a number of modernist reflexive conventions, calling attention to the play in the process of performing the play in the midst of performing it. The playwright focuses on the artificiality of play-acting in general and specifically calls upon actors to depart from the performance, speak to each other as non-character performers, and at times directly address the audience.

Smith and I decided that it was important to appropriate such theatricalized moments, creating a world in which these instances can take place. Smith shared a YouTube video (1) with me she thought might be a useful basis and inspiration for our approach. This video featured the production process for the National Theatre’s 2009 production of *Mother Courage*. Utilizing an au vista, no masking of the backstage area or blackouts for scene shifts, a vocal Foley artist, and to use atmospheric visuals such as fog and haze. It became apparent to me that this video was the major, if not sole source of inspiration for the director.

It took me a week to figure out what these approaches meant and how to shape them into our space. I grasped firmly to the idea that an abstract setting would still complement and support the characters, while also allowing the large animal figures space for entrances, movement, and exits. Wilder wrote the script as an allegory, basing almost all the characters upon his reading of the Hebrew

Bible incorporating the story of Adam and Eve and their children as the main characters and their maid, Sabina, as the snake in the Garden of Eden. The use of allegory led me to incorporate natural elements, initially to base the set on the Tree of Life. Utilizing the Christian story of creation from Genesis I found that the use of natural materials and Earthly elements would benefit the design. I envisioned a tree that had overgrown man's great inventions and was returning them to the Earth from which they had sprung. Smith was not keen on this idea, and her opposition turned me to other research. She feared that the use of a tree on stage would inhibit us from being able to travel to the Boardwalk in Act II and kept reflecting on a previous University production that had poorly crafted trees in it. Her lack of faith and distance from these elements lead me to look elsewhere for inspiration. Louise Nevelson's "found object collage art" led me down a different path. Perhaps incorporating inventions into the walls of a house would be a strong concept? Mr. Antrobus', the lead male character, represents knowledge and is an inventor and intellectual, and having a physical representation of man's creation on the set would help to depict the span of time and knowledge garnered throughout history. In retrospect, looking back on what the set became, an extrapolation on this idea would have made a stronger design.

For a month we talked intensely about the core of this production as human resilience and survival, but after showing Smith my initial renderings I realized that the characterization and abstract quality I was giving these elements was entirely wrong. I had been channeling natural fissures, the arbitrary use of light, and artificial materials to convey the organic evolution of mankind in the

natural world. My idea was to state that time, as represented by Nature, is the only constant, and that Nature will eventually take over everything. My designs incorporated the use of scrim and corrugated plastic sheeting to form walls that allowed the use of shadow play on the back walls of the set. Smith's gut reaction to this design was that it was too abstract and perhaps her concept of going Brechtian was wrong.

This process created some initial challenges and conflicting responses from various design faculty advisors. I was being told that I should have one-on-one meetings with directors one day, and then the next being told I should only meet with the director with the whole design team present. This conflicting information caused a few very intense weeks while I was trying to create, adapt, and meet with Smith as much as possible to get to the core of what she thought the show was. I discovered that one-on-one meetings were established a stronger and more open conversation and when we met with a larger group that Smith became uncertain about her ideas. Her thesis began to change and she struggled to define what she thought the core of the show was about. In one-on-one meetings we were able to come to a consensus, but in group meetings it became apparent that Smith had a lack of confidence in what we had decided. I think that the personal meetings yielded greater results, in the long run, however, aiming at a moving target ended up elongating my design process. Upon redesigning the set four times in one-week, I presented the penultimate version.

To present my new design I began by cultivating a style sheet with a pictorial representation of the elements I wanted to incorporate. I then created

computer-generated renderings using a combination of Vectorworks and Adobe Photoshop. My design deadlines were quickly approaching, I had kept up with the design calendar throughout the process and tried to create white models with various iterations as we went along, however, at this point my design packet and color model were due in a week.

This design utilized a corrugated plastic covered steel framework that formed four large walls and a flown fabric backdrop whose intent was to simulate the natural elements during each act. These walls moved locations on the set to adapt to the two settings called for in the show: the Antrobus' house and the Boardwalk. Smith was not sold on the use of the corrugated plastic and felt that it would make our world feel too cold. I liked the idea of incorporating a man-made material into a show that focuses on man's fight against nature. Smith's suggested alternative was seed paper, which led me to want to use a painted muslin fabric, which would not be as delicate as paper. The furniture for the set was to be made of natural materials formed into familiar shapes: benches, hassocks, and Le Corbusier-influenced chairs.

Once I had completed the design, Smith rejected it. This iteration, she stated, was still too cold and did not feel enough like home. During this production meeting I was able to hear her response, but I still needed time to process and be able to interpret what she was saying. However, at this point in the meeting Madsen jumped in and used a pen on my rendering to provide a visual for Smith. This was both a jarring and educational moment for me; my initial reaction was to sit and draw on my rendering for the remainder of the meeting and

flush out what Smith had just said to me. I wish I had been given those few minutes to process and present my ideas rather than to have it all happen in that instant. During the initial conversation I was already planning in my head to sketch on the rendering while the design team went on to discuss other areas. I did not feel that I needed another day to process this information, just a few minutes to draw without ten people looking over my shoulder. I learned that it is okay just to give in to your instinct and start drawing right then and there. This communication helped us get to the final version of the scenic design. Thanks to Professor Madsen's guidance in a meeting, Smith was able to verbalize her thesis, "Home as sanctuary."

I do not agree that such a thesis accurately captures what this play is about. I think that Wilder was making a larger commentary about humankind's survival instinct, and the family core is only a small part of that tendency. Man has not survived thanks solely to his home, or to his mother and father, but to the ingenuity, and resilience of the human spirit. I re-read the script bearing in mind this concept and adapted the culmination of my research and every design that lead up to this realization.

Taking the notes from the meeting, I once again dove into Adobe Photoshop to create a new rendering. This concept kept many of the same elements, but it sculpted the profile of the walls to resemble the studs of an A-Frame house. The studs were not set on traditional centers; they were instead reflective of a Mondrian-inspired influence, whose line evokes a modern style that is more interesting than construction stud patterns. Smith embraced this design,

stating that this profile achieved what she was looking for, and that it actually more closely resembled a home.

I took this image and then began to draft it using Vectorworks 2014. I created a 3D rendering from the draft and double-checked that my concept would work in the space. This incorporation of new technology helped to produce a more accurate rendering than could be produced from older rendering techniques. I then drafted the entire show under the supervision of Madsen, who helped me red-line edit my packet. The entire drafting packet was 15 pages once completed.

CHAPTER 2: PRODUCTION PROCESS

Once the design was agreed upon, I sent the drafting to the technical director, Mitchell Critel, and lighting tests began.

Critel and his Assistant Technical Directors, Dani Mader and Greg Rishoi, priced out the whole show based on the 15 page drafting packet that I prepared. The initial cost-out, based on a \$3,500 budget was \$1,414 in the red. During our meeting Critel suggested changing the dimension of the tube steel from 2” to 1.” a change that would not alter my design aesthetic and save \$1000. There was also a budget dilemma with the purchase of zero throw casters, a very expensive and necessary investment for the school, so the faculty decided that these casters would become a technology upgrade purchase and their cost would not affect the show budget. There was also a question about which shop would construct the 11 pieces of furniture called for in this show. Critel decided that the scenic budget could cover the cost but not the labor, and the furniture then became a part of the property budget. This change meant that I needed to change none of the design for construction time and labor. The only other change that took place during the budget meeting was to simplify the profile of the seam between Walls A and B. The original design created concern for Critel and me as to whether or not it would be able to be constructed to create a seamless look. Altering this profile created a simplified layout that construction crew members could cut in plywood and then wrap with fabric in a more time-efficient and exact manner, allowing for easier adjustment upon installation.

At the end of the fall semester lighting designer Sheric Hull and I began our lighting tests to determine whether or not it would be best to back the walls

with muslin or with paper. We first performed the test for ourselves to establish the required distance and focus. We concluded that we would need the entirety of the upstage space to get the right distance throw for the lighting fixtures; we also concluded that the original drafting of the shadow objects would need to increase to almost full scale. After testing our hypothesis we then arranged a meeting with Smith to show her our discoveries. Luckily, Critel stumbled upon our meeting and was able to help us better prepare based on his prior experience with the director. He suggested that we have more options available to look at and was able to facilitate a smoother discussion with the director. This meeting resulted in our needing to schedule a third and final preview with the director in an effort to establish the diameter of the ferris wheel as well as look at a scaled-up version of the picket fence. Hull was also to test other lighting positions and make sure the correct throw and placement would not interfere with the shadow play and lighting of the fabric wall. He performed this final test once the second semester commenced after Christmas Break and answered all remaining questions. The diameter of the Ferris Wheel shadow-object was solidified at 20" for minimum clarity, and I had fortunately already scaled all of the shadow-object drafting up so there needed no change for the shop drawings.

Another problem Critel found in the drafting packet was the proximity of the rotating walls to the electric and the hanging fabric wall. He observed that the path of the wall's pivot point would hit the lighting instruments and get caught in the fabric drop. After a discussion with Hull we decided to move the line sets.

This adjustment later ended up serving us well as the fabric drop no longer flew in and out during the show.

There was uncertainty procuring of the mammoth and dinosaur costumes throughout the beginning of the design process. The dimension of these pieces dictated the door size and kept the unit in limbo for a few weeks. However, the costume shop decided that it would construct the pieces and decided that the door frame needed enlargement to 3'-0" wide from the smaller 2'-6" width.

During the production build process, the design team went on weekly walk-throughs of the Prop Shop, Scene Shop, and Paint Shop. These visits provided a visual context for the progress of the set. Knowing I did not have to schedule shop meetings on my own and that there was time set aside in the work week for the whole team to meet to address any questions that had arisen during the build was a relief. The team toured the shops every Friday at 4:30 pm.

The only truly shocking moment that occurred during a walkthrough was when we were finally able to look at the ladders we had discussed for the "hours" characters at the end of the show. The objective of their use was to elevate the actors above the walls so we could see their faces and thereby they would not obstruct the scene. From the beginning I had discussed with Smith about using a-frame ladders; at this walkthrough, however, we discovered we had been discussing two very different things. Despite the fact that I had specifically discussed with her the fact that no other ladders would really be usable to achieve what she wanted, she specifically stated she did not want other platforms constructed--yet she was vehemently against using these ladders. Her reaction

completely blindsided me, and it seemed that this situation blindsided her as well.

Luckily, after a few days process time and some intense technical rehearsals narrowing down the correct ladders and working with the actors, the ladders ended up being an elegant solution for the desired look.

CHAPTER 3: PRODUCTION PROPERTIES

This show had several Properties Masters assigned to the process before the final one emerged. I was thankful that Greg Rishoi was that individual, since the design of this show called for a lot of custom built furniture. Rishoi's sculptural background and carpentry skills made the creation of these pieces possible; he was able to pull a large amount of other properties from stock or purchase them.

During the walkthroughs and throughout the rehearsal process, the director requested that all of the constructed furniture be standable. This required more time and materials, which also drove up the cost of the items. Rishoi was able to build everything to suit her requests and to meet my specifications within the scheduled time. A week later, after most of the production of the furniture had begun, a rehearsal report requested that all furniture would need to survive fairly rough treatment. Creating furniture that is both lightweight and standable is an engineering feat and requires time and effort, and it would have been easier to accomplish earlier in the process. After clarifying this note I discovered that the request only pertained to one hassock and that this piece would be the only one thrown. During the walkthroughs Smith divulged to me that she had blocked actors to sit on the backs of benches fabricated from PVC; those benches could not withstand such use. Rishoi then rebuilt these items with a cool demeanor and expert aplomb.

Another specific piece that Smith requested from the very beginning was a Segway battery-powered electric vehicle to replace the "negro in rolling chair" called for in the script. In her attempt to modernize Wilder's play and perhaps

make it more politically correct she felt that a Segway would best fit the action were it to be a “cool alternative that a child would want to steal.” Every team member tried to secure a Segway rental, but all deals fell through. The best alternative that Rishoi could find was a new bi-wheel product called “Orbtiz Wheels.” The actor charged with operating the device, Christian Novotny, tried his best to develop the skill required to use these on stage, but then had to resort to a third alternative, his skateboard. This solution ended up being the most elegant and convincing with the blocking and circumstances on stage. Anything else would have been clunky. This result solidified my belief that I should always go with my gut when making a decision, while acknowledging that the director always has the power to veto my choices.

The rest of the props were procured without a hiccough and the detailed Prop Book can be found in the Appendix .

CHAPTER 4: PROJECTIONS

Wilder’s original text calls for the use of projections in two places, at the top of Act I and the top of Act II. Smith wanted to remain true to the script and to

incorporate projections into our production as well. The technical faculty were none too keen about the use of projections, since the Johnny Carson School lacks the faculty to teach this area. After I met with Smith and created a list of what the projections would entail, Professor Laurel Shoemaker set up a meeting with Steve Kolbe in the Film and Media department. With his support and recommendations of film student Alexis Borchardt, we were on our way to incorporating multimedia into our production. I e-mailed Borchardt and set up a meeting with her to review what the projections called for and to ask for her assistance in creating the footage.

Borchardt, Smith, Sonia Sandoval(the sound designer), my assistant, Gabriela Doan, and I all met to form a means to create the projections. We decided we needed two shooting dates, that there would be a mixture of stock footage filmed combined with action footage from the actors, that all of the sound would be pre-recorded. We agreed that I would design the three logos required. .

On February 7 we met in the Howell Memorial Theatre with a skeleton crew of film students and to record a small scene with just two actors. On February 14, we met on location at a home on Capitol Beach in West Lincoln and utilized the home's back yard that looked out on the lake.

Borchardt edited the footage together and synched the sound by February 19, when the team met again and reviewed the film. We all approved the content and I gave it to projections engineer, Steve Miller. Miller had already plotted out where our projector would go and approved lens sizes and image throw locations with me. After the walls were in place Miller and I met to look at how the

projections were striking the walls and decided that we needed a larger lens to fill the entirety of walls A and B instead of having an area that was 4'-0" x 6'-0". The projections struck two various wall positions so some minor tweaking was necessary to land the image in the right spot in both acts.

CHAPTER 5: REHEARSAL PROCESS

I began attending rehearsals on February 16, watching the student actors use the space and to clarify any questions or to correct any visual misuse of the space. I was quite pleased to discover that the set was primarily working in the

way I had envisioned. However, things began to change a few rehearsals later when the physical set started to come together. The use of the walls in Act I was starting to change, based on what the student actors and Smith were able physically to see. The shop had to cover large portions of the walls first and then cover the windows later. Since these holes were open, the actors began to gesture through the windows and use them in the first act, something I had depicted in the renderings or discussed previously with the director. This change actually made for a stronger tie between Act I and Act III, when all the windows of the home had been blown out by the war.

A few days later, rotating Wall C got stuck on its track. This wall was designed to spin 360 degrees and track across stage. The technical director discovered that the installation of the tracks was not exact and that the misalignment had caused the caster to falter, necessitating a repair that cost several hundred dollars. Instead of demanding that this be fixed so that the design would remain intact, Critel and I came up with an alternative solution. The walls would no longer rotate, which would set the build schedule back a few days, but overall it would save money and troubleshooting time. Being flexible and to think on my feet proved to work in this situation, a skill that I had been cultivating since the second to last design meeting. That flexibility was especially true when we decided to make one of the removable panels on Wall C swing on a point to create the crumbling effect we were looking to achieve.

The fabric background underwent many changes in rehearsal. I had designed this unit to represent the elements that affect each act: an ice age, a

flood, and a world war. It consisted of two-inch wide strips of torn muslin in varied lengths that spanned an entire line set. During Act I this unit was to slowly fly in throughout the dialogue and end in place having created a wall of ice. In Act II it was to be blown around by fans to simulate a storm, and in Act III it was to be tied up to create a looming cloud. None of those effects occurred due to Smith deciding to cut the units action in the rehearsal process. After initiating discussion it became clear that she did not want to use it and had become attached to seeing it as a stagnant backdrop during the rehearsal time she had on stage previous to technical rehearsals. The only intended use that remained intact by the end of rehearsals was the fans blowing the strips in Act II. Regardless of the meetings that lead up to its creation, almost all of it was cut. Even seeing how this unit was intended to be used did not happen in tech rehearsal. This severe alteration in an important facet of my entire design scheme left me flummoxed. I was thankful the fabric looked beautiful in this iteration of a cyclorama, but had I known that this would be the eventual use, or more specifically non-use, I would have designed something different or cut it all together.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REHEARSAL

Technical rehearsals began on Friday, February 27. Since I had been attending rehearsals for quite some time by that point, there were initially no large changes to accommodate. The Tuesday and Thursday rehearsals before tech

week began were dedicated to soft technical rehearsals, where the lighting and sound designers can run their cues over rehearsal to get a feeling for the show and to begin a dialogue with the director and other designers. Unfortunately neither of these designers utilized their time in the manner intended, and neither Smith nor I were able to see the formation of the show's other elements. This experience was unpleasant for me, particularly when I saw how the lighting effected the fabric strips I had designed. I realized that lighting designer Sheric Hull and I needed to have conversation to resolve the dilemma. Up to this point in the production process, all discussion of the lighting had been theoretical. I had seen no light renderings and he had shared only a few resource images with me. I nevertheless felt that leading up to this point, Hull and I had enjoyed great communication with each other, based on lengthy discussions about achieving strong looks evocative of the location and mood of each scene. Since no real lighting cues, however, were available to me until this Friday technical rehearsal, a lot of planned visual effect was incongruent with prior discussion. I postponed any conversations pertaining to lighting until Sunday night since Smith seemed to have more notes to go over with Hull than I did at that point.

I had a difficult time during rehearsal in finding a balance of what I could bring up with the lighting designer and what was inappropriate. I knew that in this educational setting there is time allotted for notes and that there is time needed to gain experience and the acquisition of required knowledge. The main struggle for me was the way the lighting designer initially lit the fabric strip backdrop. In our original concept meetings about it, the backdrop was designed to represent

dramatic action and to function as a background piece. Only during the first technical rehearsals were we actually able to see light on the backdrop, but it seemed that most of the focus was on the fabric strips themselves.

Notwithstanding the director's changed concept of how she wanted the strips used, perhaps Hull did not have enough time to alter his looks accordingly. I was ultimately able to have a conversation with him and we discussed the use of light focused on the strips, which helped somewhat to resolve the problem.

The largest struggle during technical rehearsal from a scenic standpoint was the aforementioned use of the ladders in Act III. These scenic pieces had suddenly become problematic a few weeks prior to technical rehearsals, as noted above, which had me on guard the moment they appeared onstage. The principal concern from Smith was that we would see the ladders and that the student actors, when standing on them, would find themselves turned at an awkward angle away from the audience. I knew that the height of the ladders and their proximity to the wall would render these concerns moot. What I did not anticipate was the audible noise and the discomfort of one student actor the first time the student clambered onto the ladders in the final scene. Three of the four students required to mount the ladders expressed satisfaction and remained comfortable with height on the ladder required for speaking the dialogue. The fourth student's unease, however, required us to borrow a different ladder from The Playhouse Theatre in Lincoln. Smith's other concern was that we would still be able to see the ladders set in place and to see the orange color of each ladders frame. The first few days of rehearsal with the ladders caused other fears to materialize. Since the walls still

lacked the fabric covering I had intended, audiences could see the ladders through the gaping holes in the wall. The situation was positively resolved when the set crew applied the planned covering to walls and when the technical director was able to train the crew charged with setting the ladders in place. In performance, the ladder function worked perfectly and achieved exactly what was needed.

The only other element that changed was the use of the ferris wheel shadow in Act II. The ferris wheel was another example of a set piece intended for one purpose and ended up serving very little purpose at all. I had originally designed it to be seen for a large portion of the show. A separate discussion between Hull and Smith to which I was not a party changed the concept of its use, a development which I did not anticipate. I am left with the conclusion that this instance once again re-establishes the desirability that all meetings about decisions concerning set design should provide opportunities for everyone on the full design to be present and heard. This instance inhibited me from being able to stand up and fight for my work, since it had apparently been decided on for quite some time before it was brought to my attention. Perhaps I was not clear about it's use in previous meetings, however, it's creation was based solely on my concepts and I wish that it had been used how I intended it.

CONCLUSION

The Skin of our Teeth was an incredible learning opportunity for me. It was my first show working with JD Madsen and the first show for which I was able to utilize all of the new knowledge he was imparting in the classroom. I struggled with finding ways to articulate my design concepts and to carry them

through to satisfactory conclusion, but the faculty support I had helped me to achieve a new and satisfying level of artistic endeavor.

One thing that this show emphasized is that the director has the ultimate say in anything related to production values. Early in the process, when I could not decipher what Smith wanted, I realized that my ability to convey in my own artistic voice the values I sought for this production and to which I could fully commit myself needed a serious upgrade. The process of creating this production of *The Skin of Our Teeth* pushed me to explore various design options, how to render, and how to present them quickly. Being able to think on my feet and to have a ready response will be the keys in my future success.

One can design something, create it in a model, budget it, and build it. Yet on the whim of the director everything can change. This show helped me to hone in on my tact and my diplomatic skills; it taught me when to fight for a design element that needs defending if the show's artistic viability is to survive. I also learned when to keep my own counsel when there may be design dilemmas rendered unachievable when other concerns predominate. A good example of an irresolvable dilemma was the knowledge that the fabric strips would have been beautiful if they had only been purposefully lit, which in the end they were. Another example is the recognition that we simply had no other option for the play's final scene than to use a borrowed ladder and to take more time to train the actors. Such recognitions constitute a form of knowledge, the kind of knowledge that comes only with experience, patience, and intensity of work. Such knowledge was required for the completion of this project and it forced me to experience

situations that cannot be simulated in a classroom setting. Its overall outcome has made me both stronger and more open to future artistic endeavors.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH

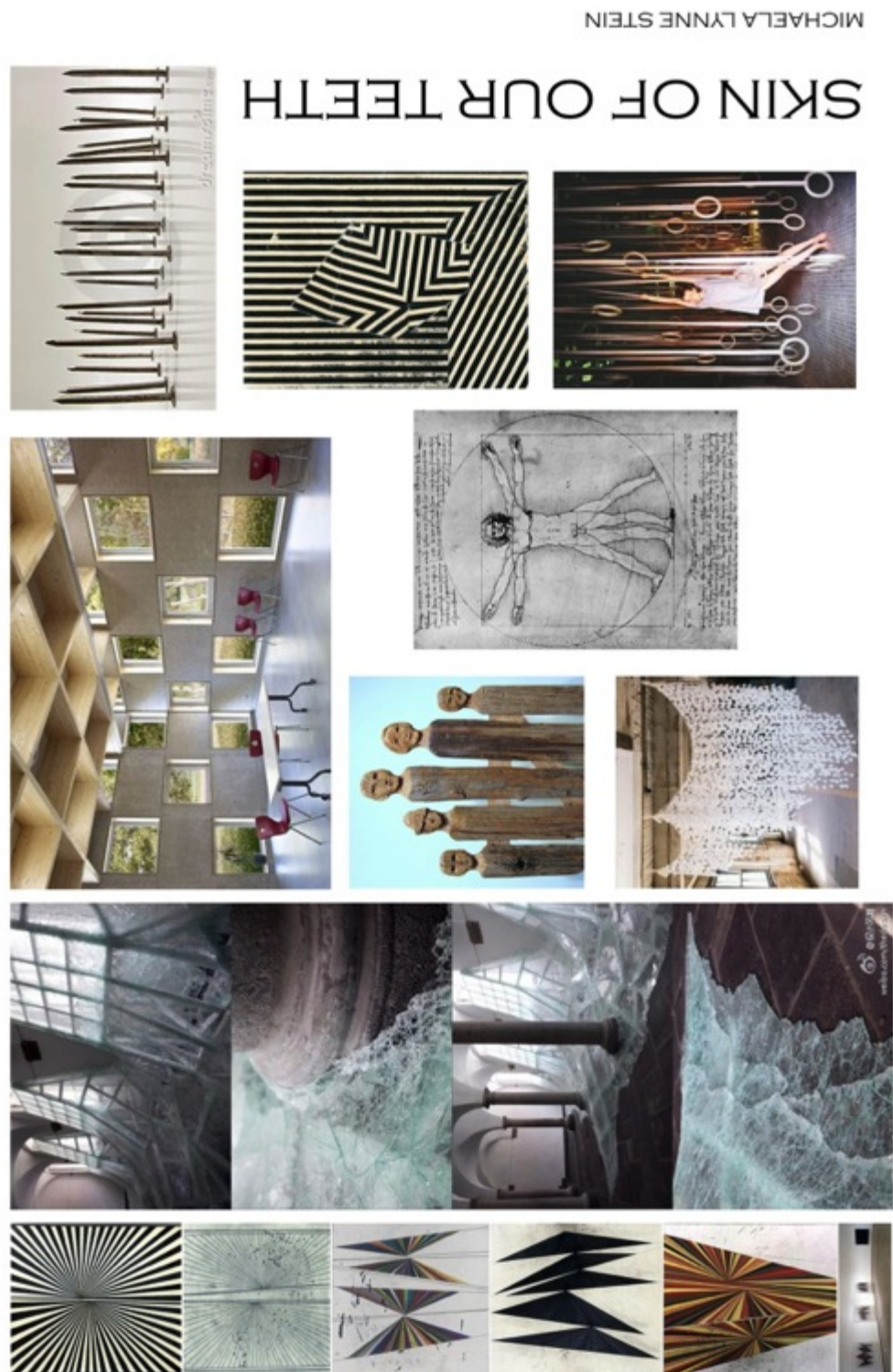


Figure A1: Initial Research Style Sheet

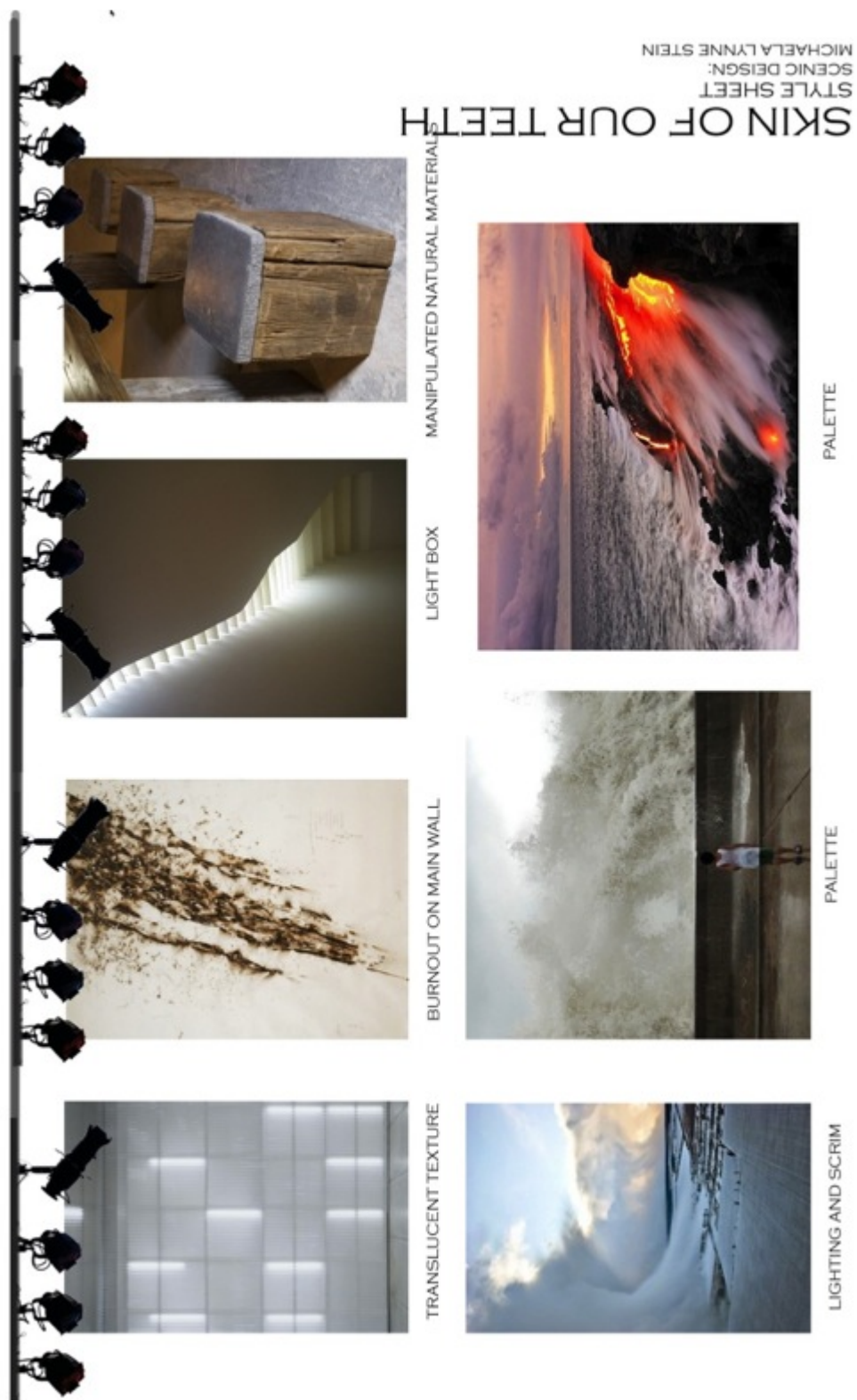


Figure A3: Final Style Sheet

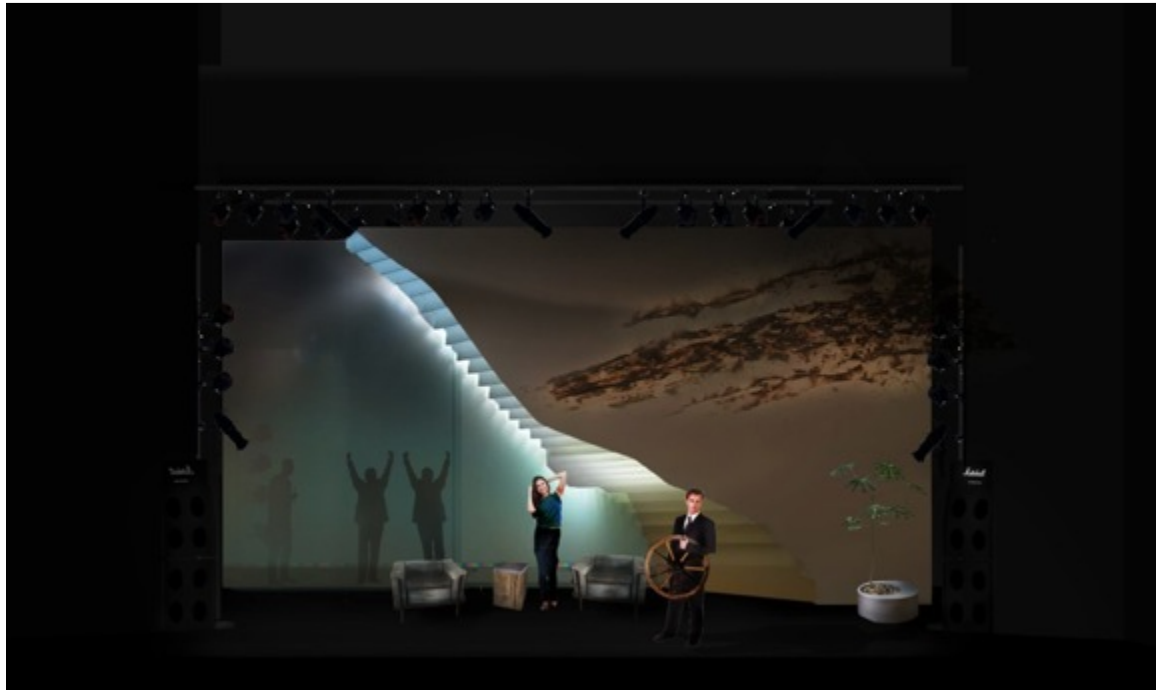
APPENDIX B: RENDERINGS

Figure B1: Act I Original Concept Rendering

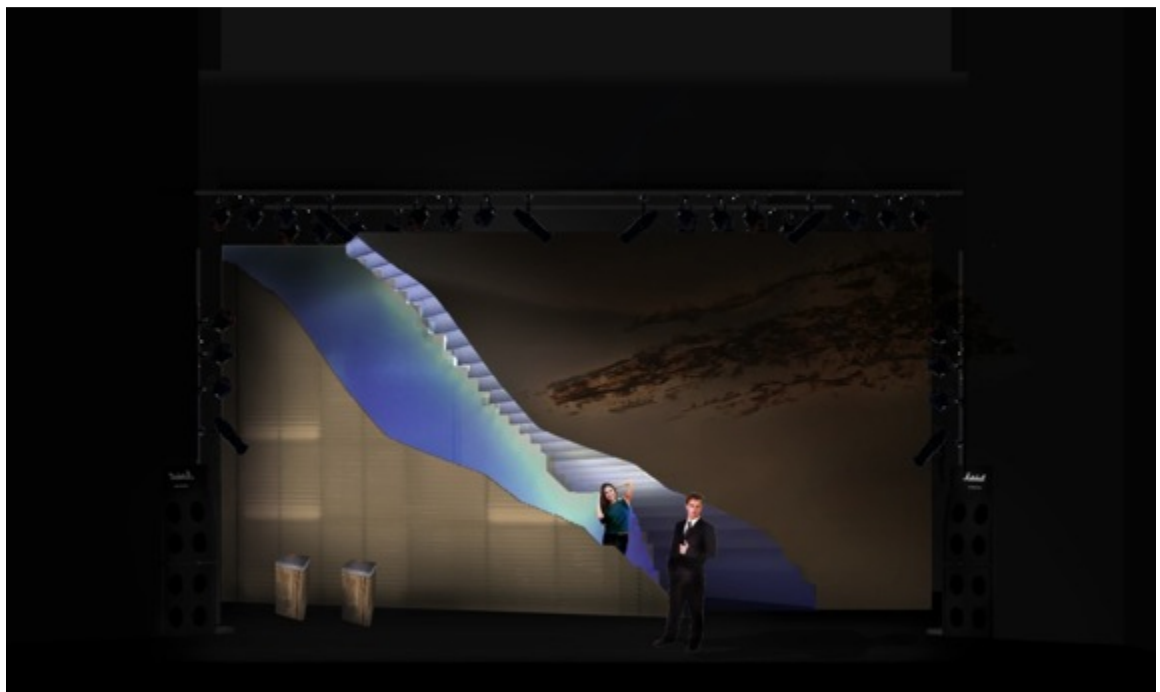


Figure B2: Act II Original Concept Rendering



Figure B3: Act III Original Concept Rendering

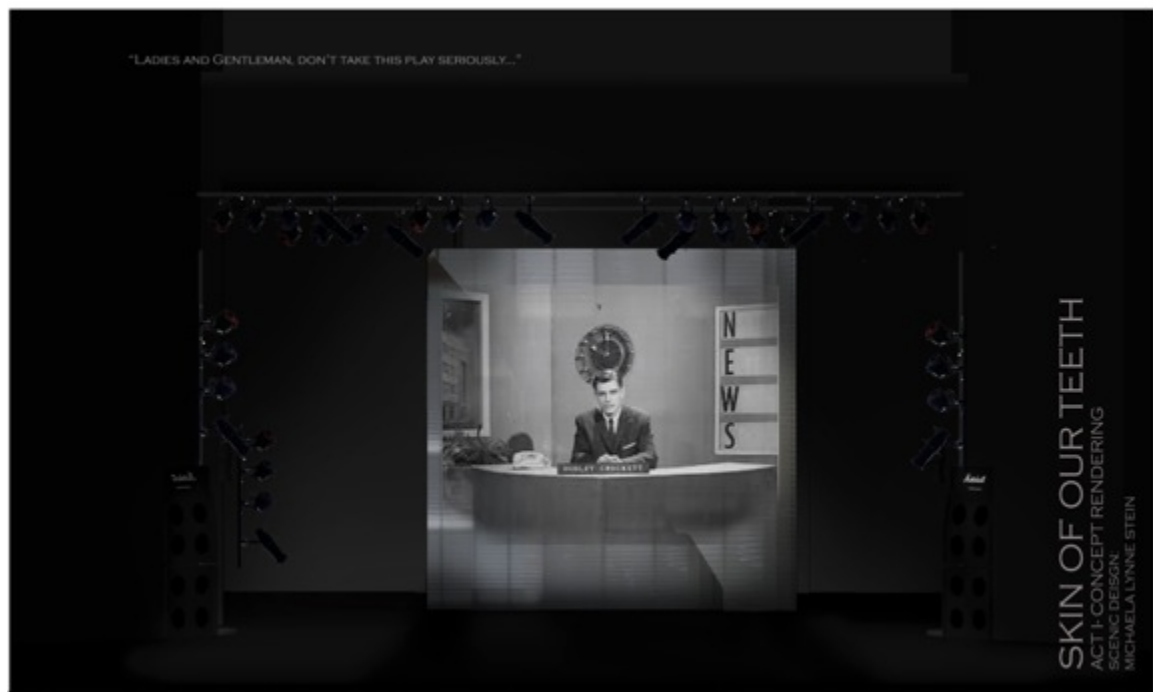


Figure B4: Act I Rendering 2.0

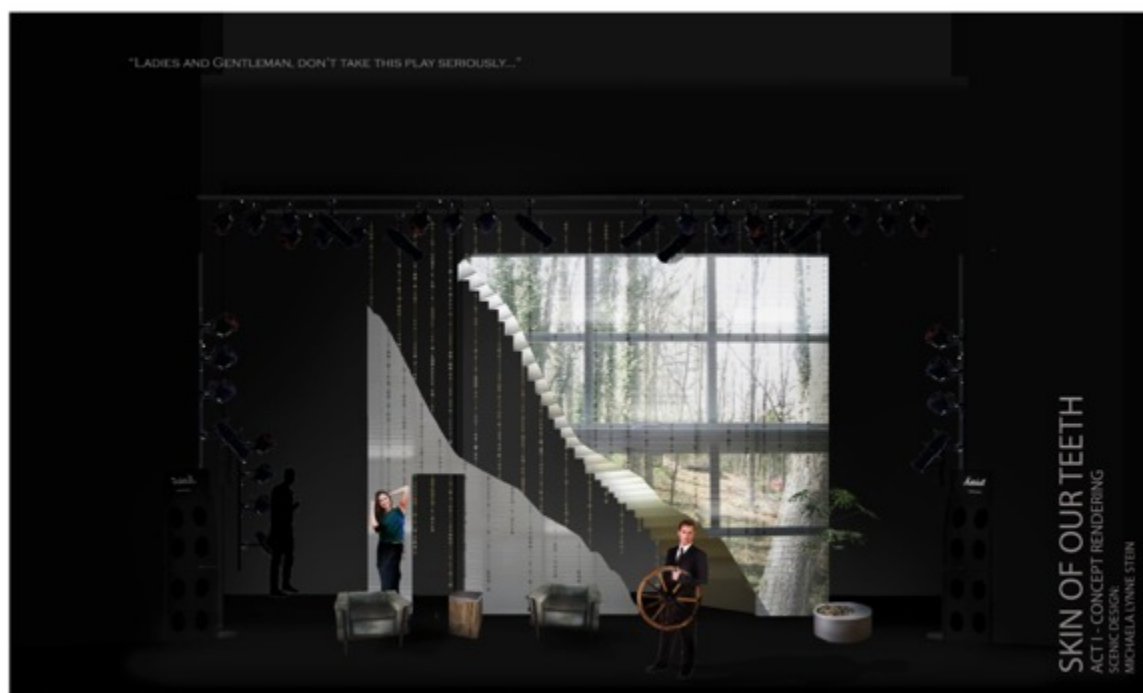


Figure B5: Act I.2 Rendering 2.0

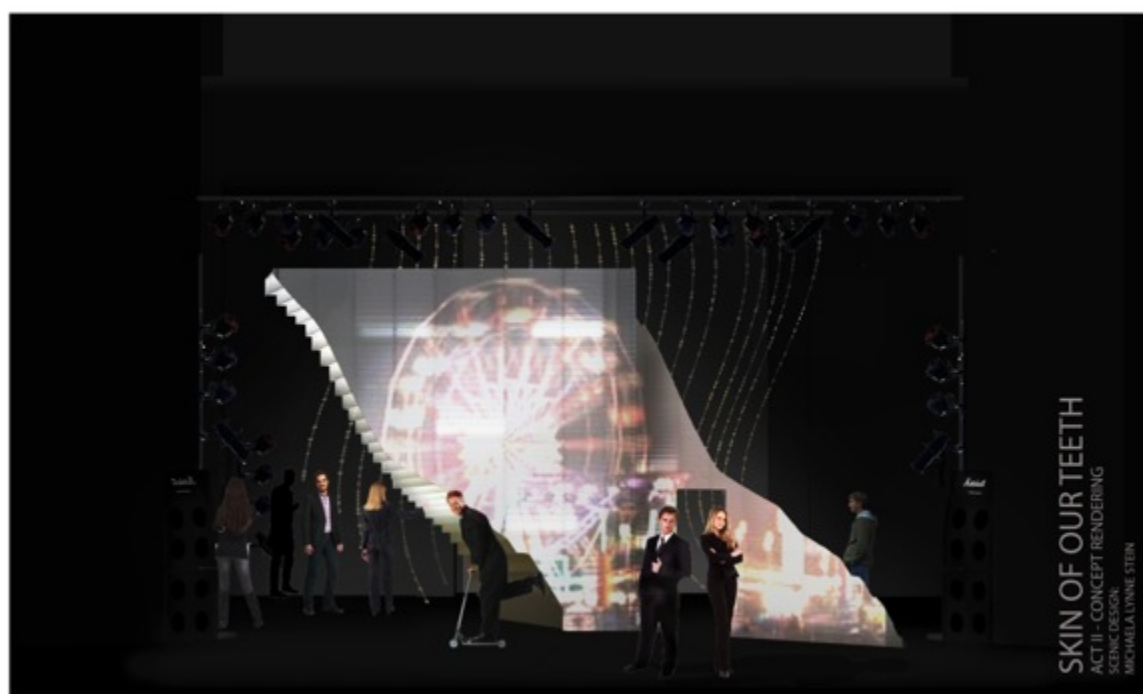


Figure B6: Act II Rendering 2.0

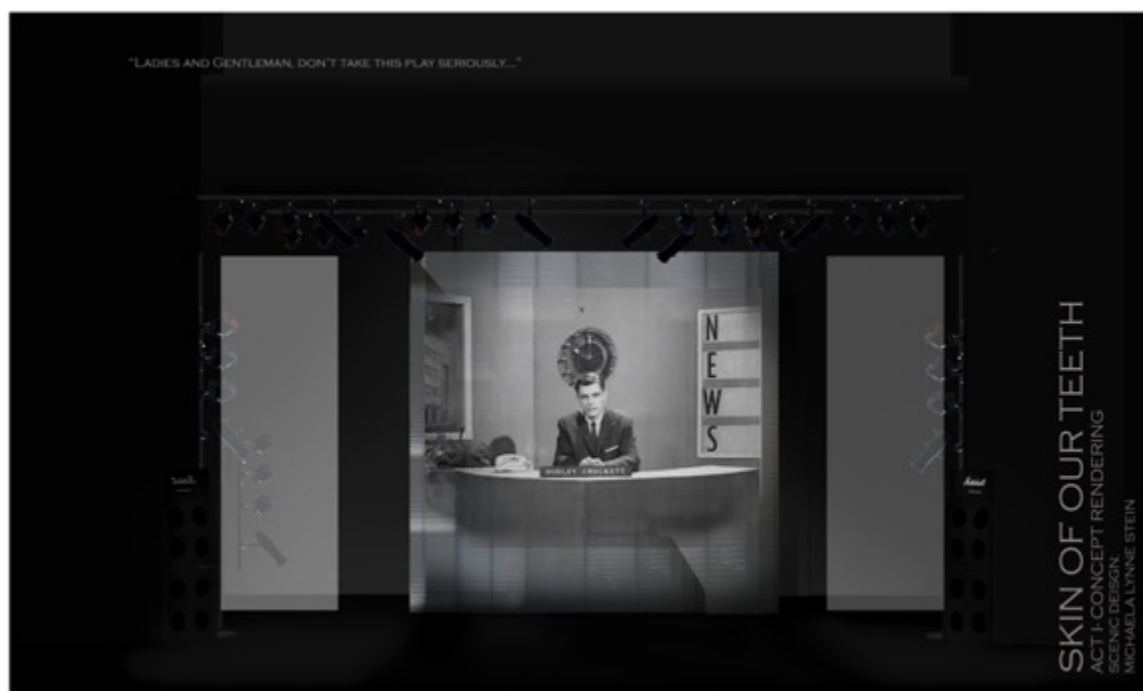


Figure B7: Act I Rendering 3.0

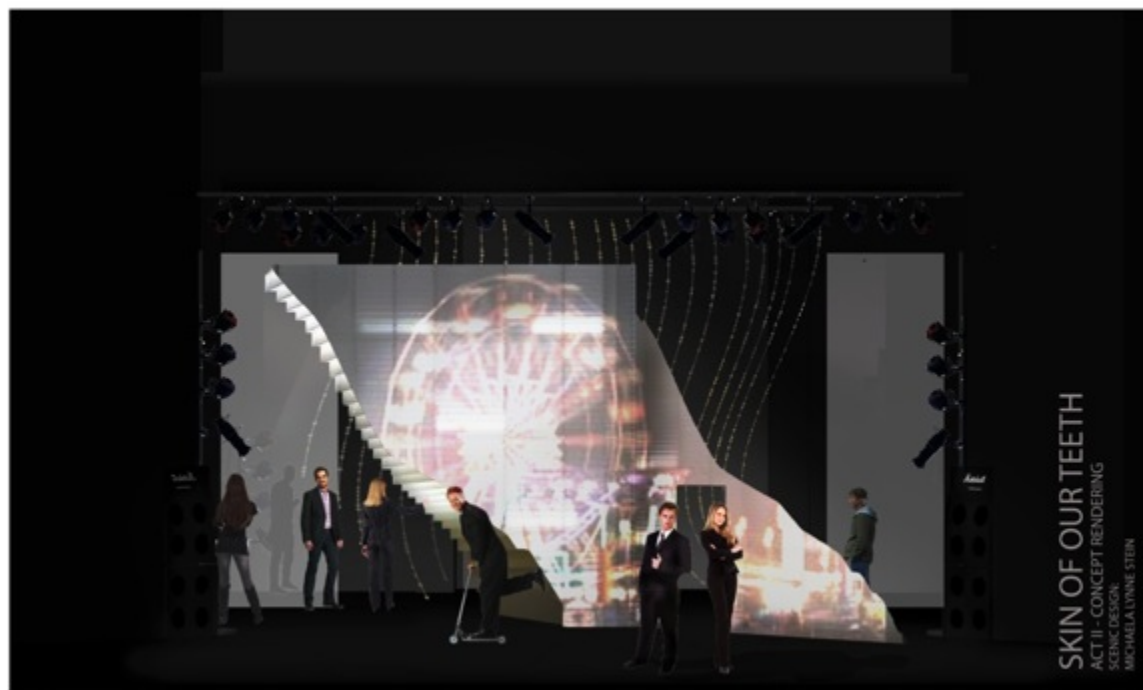


Figure B8: Act II Rendering 3.0

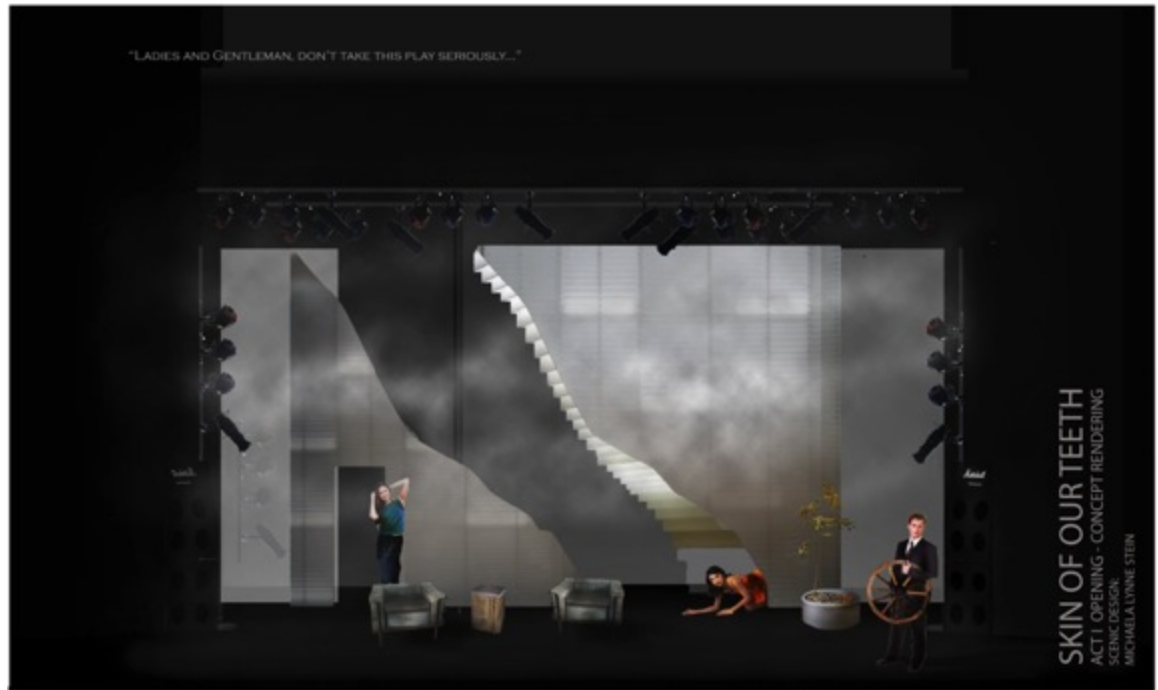


Figure B9: Act II Rendering 3.0

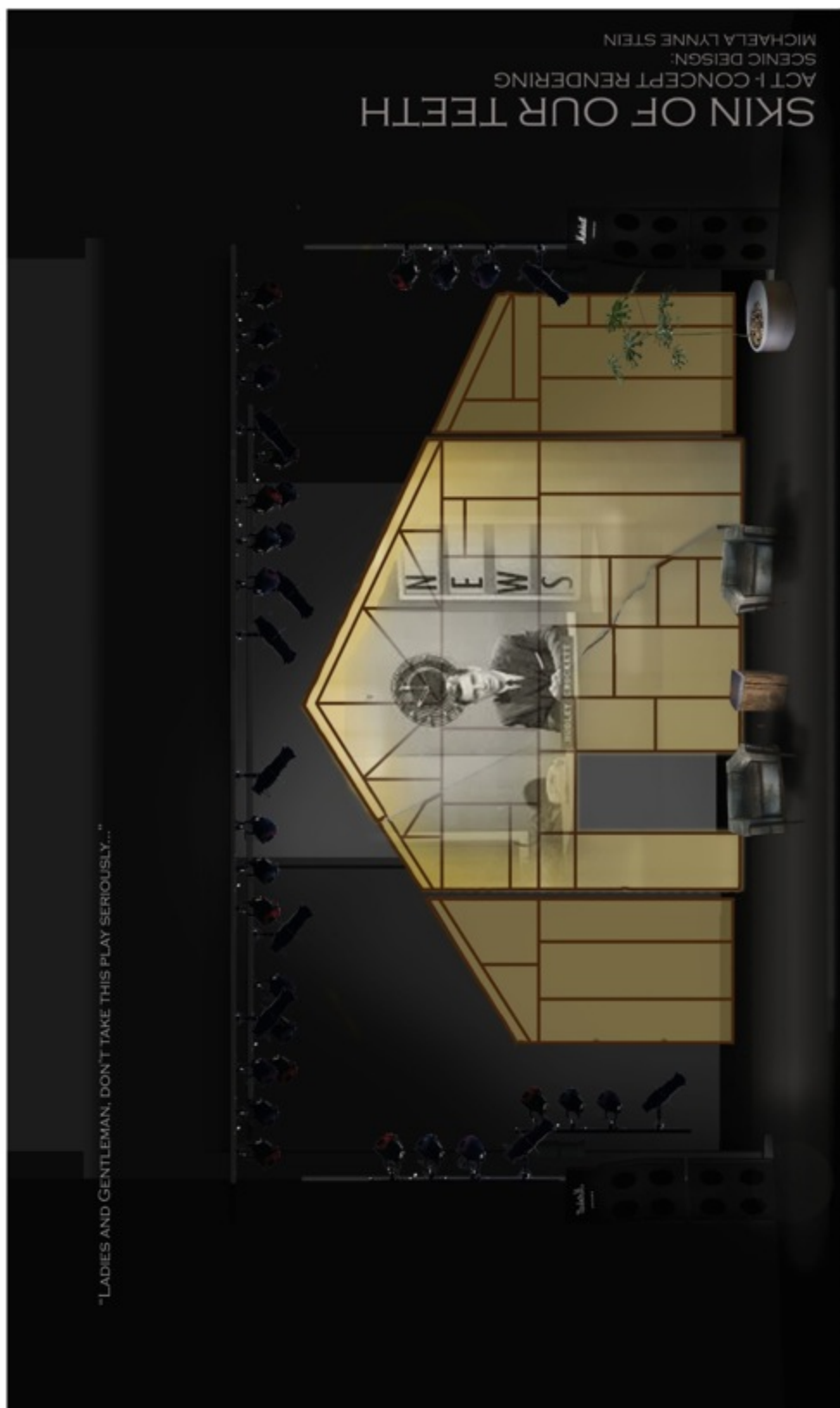


Figure B10: Act I Rendering Final

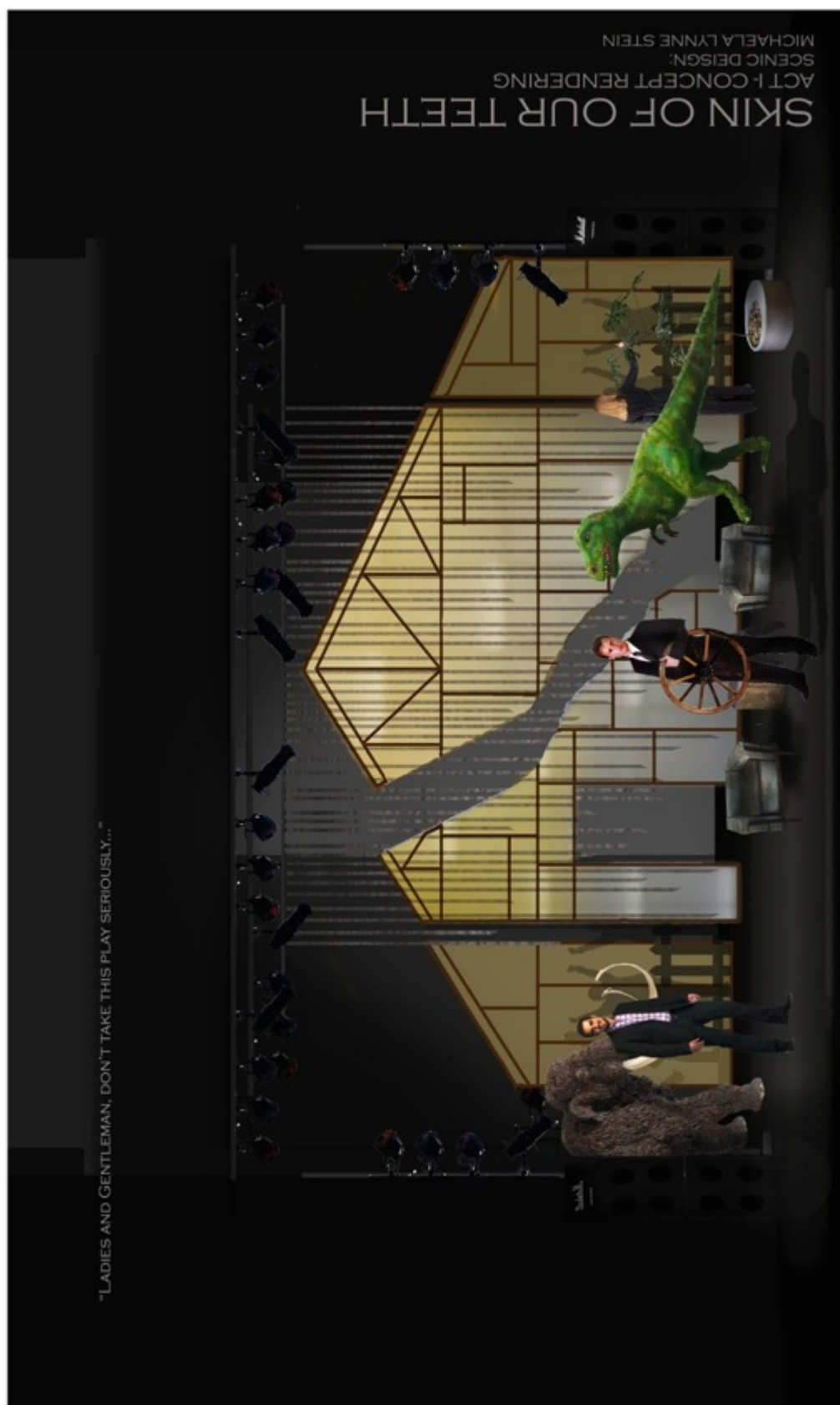


Figure B11: Act I.2 Rendering Final

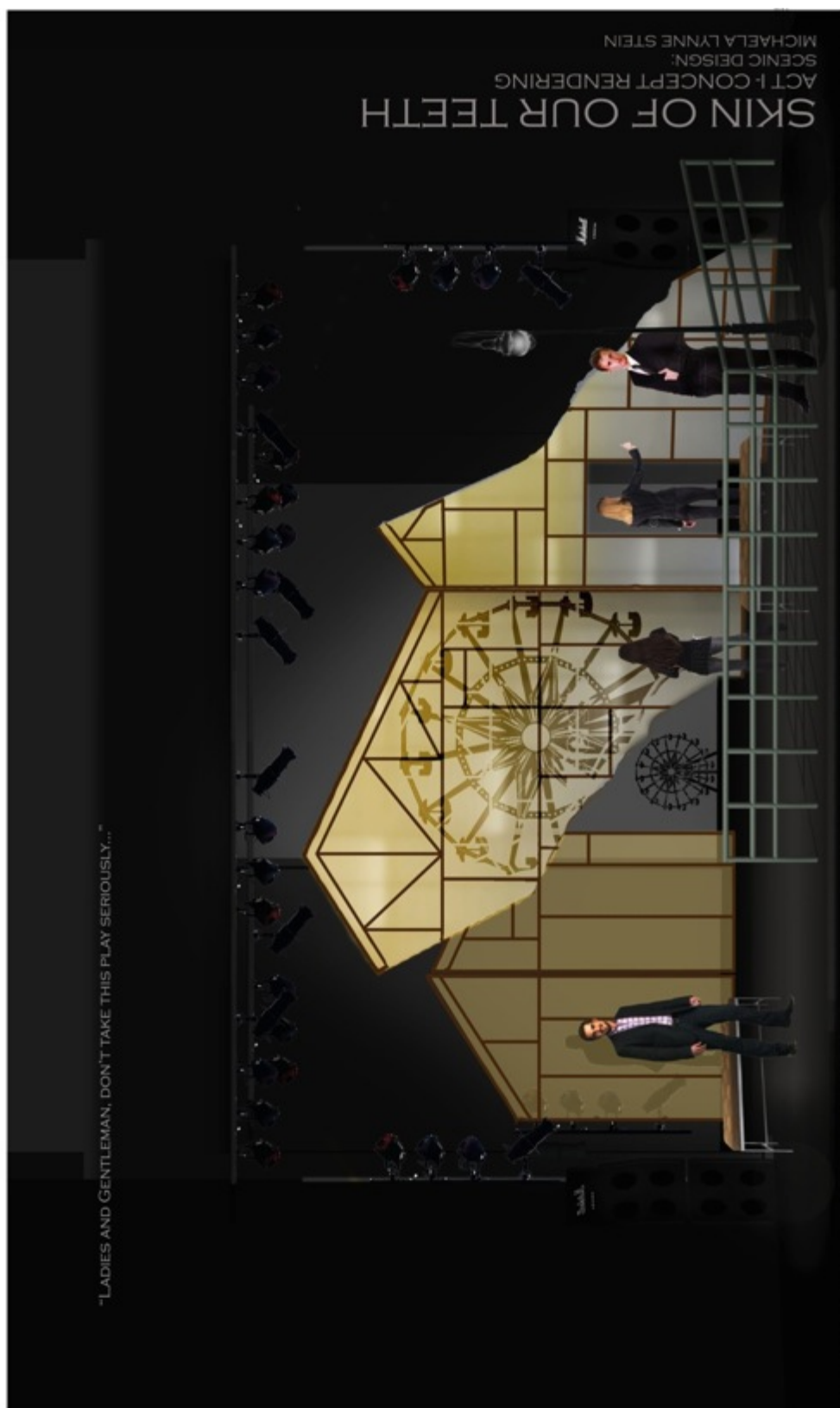


Figure B12: Act II Rendering Final

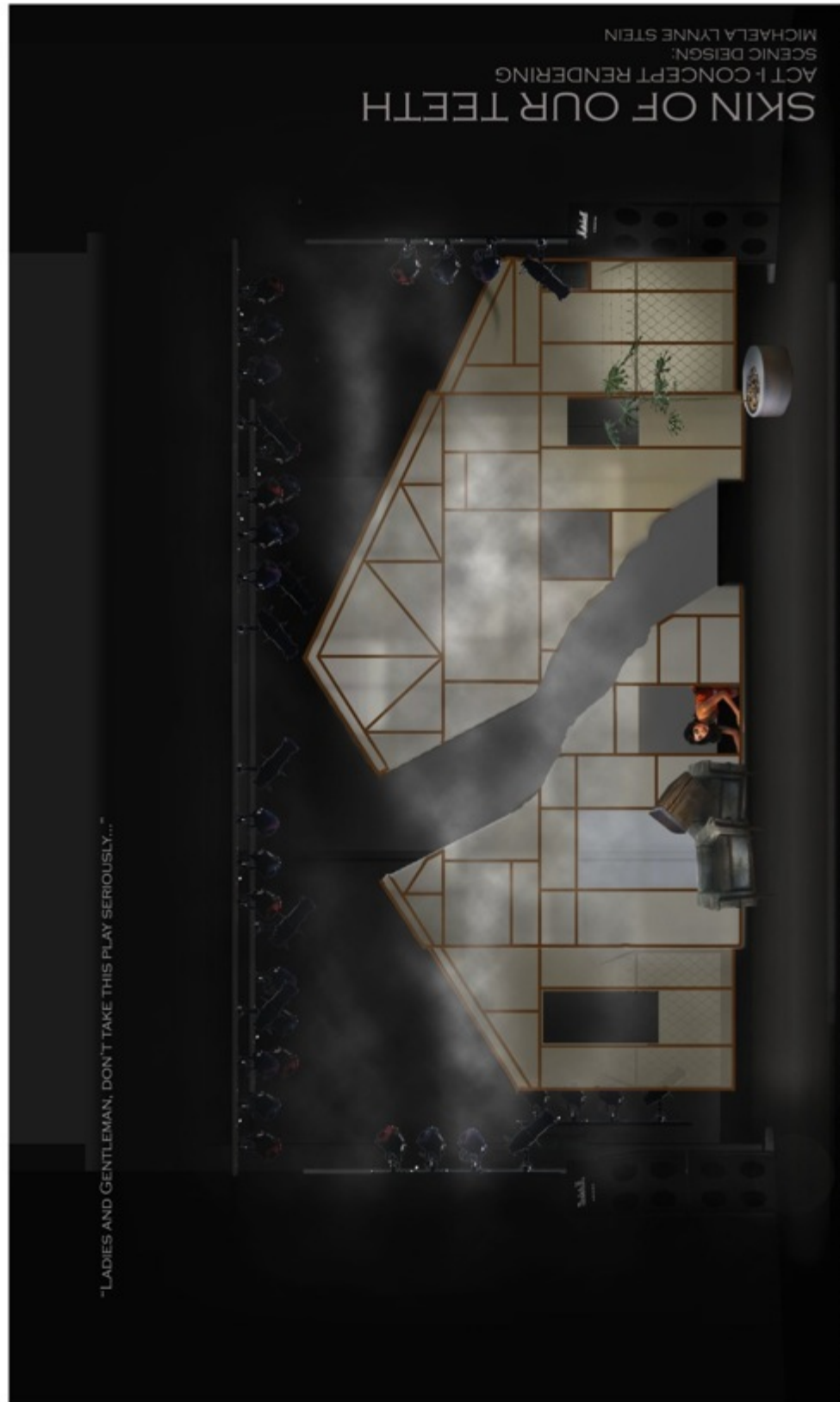


Figure B13: Act III Rendering Final

Appendix C: Properties Book

SKIN OF OUR TEETH

PROP BOOK

MLS 03/29/2015

Prop #	Prop	Description (location, paint, function)	Qty.	Notes
FURNITURE AND SET DRESSING				
1	MR. ANTROBUS'S CHAIR		1	
2	ROCKING CHAIR		1	
3	STICKS FOR FIREPLACE		multi	
4	BIC LIGHTER		1	
5	OLD NEEDLE		1	
6	HASSOCK		1	
7	FENCE POST		1	simulated coming from shadow play
8	BENCH		1	
9	COFFEE TABLE		1	
10	END TABLE		1	
11	STOOL		1	
12	PLANT		2	1 dead, 1 alive
13	SEWING BASKET		1	
14	MICROPHONE STAND		1	
15	ANDIRON		1	see drafting
HAND PROPS				
16	STONE WHEEL		1	
17	FEATHER DUSTER		1	
18	LANTERN		1	
19	BLANKET		1	
20	GUJAR		1	
21	COFFEE PAIL		1	
22	FIREWOOD		MULTI	
23	PROGRAM		MULTI	
24	SLINGSHOT		1	
25	UMBRELLA		3	
26	MICROPHONE		1	

Figure C1: Properties List Page 1

SKIN OF OUR TEETH

PROP BOOK

MLS 03/29/2015

27	BINDER/PROMPT SCRIPT		2	
28	BABY		1	
29	READING BOOKS		6	
30	REVOLVER		1	
31	FLASHLIGHT		1	
32	COFFEE CUPS		MULTI	
33	PARCELS		MULTI	
34	RAZOR/SCOOTER		1	
35	ROLL OF BILLS		MULTI	
36	MAGIC WAND		1	
37	BABY DOLL		1	
38	BASEBALL GLOVE		1	
39	B B GUN		1	
40	LAUNDRY BASKET	filled with prop/costumes	1	
41	DELIVERY BAG	hand prop	1	
42	BICYCLE		1	
43	SLIPPERS		1	
44	ROLLING SUITCASES		2	
45	CELL PHONES		2	
46	CIGARETTE		1	
47	REFUGEE BUNDLES		multi	items that would be grabbed from home in a rush
48	REPORT CARD		1	
49	DRILL		multi	practical
50	LIQUOR BOTTLES		2	
51	BOTTLE W/LETTER		1	
52	GUN	strapped to sabina's leg	1	
CONSUMABLES				
53	SANDWICHES		MULTI	
54	BAKED POTATO		2	

Figure C2: Properties List Page 2

SKIN OF OUR TEETH

PROP BOOK

MLS 03/29/2015

55	CARROT		1	
56	BEEF CUBES		6	
57	COFFEE			
QUESTIONABLE PROPS?				
58	BIKE HELMET	questions for megan		
59	FLOATIES			
60	PINS/APRONS/ WRIST PIN CUSHION			
61	TOOL BELT			
62	APRON WITH BRUSHES			
63	WHISTLE FOR LIFEGUARD			

Figure C3: Properties List Page 3

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



1



SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



2



SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



3



SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C4: Prop Book Page 1-4

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



7

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C6: Prop Book Pages 9-12

SIGN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SIGN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



14

SIGN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SIGN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C7: Prop Book Pages 13-16

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C8: Prop Book Pages 17-20

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK

Actual program from show

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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C9: Prop Book Pages 21-24

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C10: Prop Book Pages 25-28

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C11: Prop Book Pages 29- 32

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C12: Prop Book Pages 33-36

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Figure C13: Prop Book Pages 37-40

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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C 12: Prop Book Pages 41-44

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK

REPORT CARD				
LEARNING PERIOD	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH				
ALGEBRA/STATS				
SCIENCE & MATHS				
SCIENCE				
SOCIAL STUDIES				
CIVILILITY				
COMPUTER				
COMPUTER SKILLS				
PERSONAL FINANCE				
GRADE AVERAGE				
A+ excellent A good B satisfactory C needs improvement D poor F failing				
TEACHER	GRADE _____ YEAR _____			



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Figure C13: Prop Book Pages 45-48

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C14: Prop Book Pages 49-52

SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



NUMERALS TO BE CHAINED BY ACTORS
 (SEE LIST FOR NUMERALS TO BE CHAINED BY ACTORS AND NUMERALS)

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SKIN OF OUR TEETH PROP BOOK



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Figure C15: Prop Book Pages 53-56

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Figure C16: Prop Book Pages 57-58

APPENDIX D: PRODUCTION PAPERWORK

THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH

HOWELL THEATRE

SCENIC DESIGN PACKET

SCENIC DESIGN: MICHAELA LYNN STEIN
MICHAELA.LYNN@HOWELL.ORG
602.237.2320

DIRECTOR: VIRGINIA SMITH

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: MICHAEL CHITTEL

LIGHTING DESIGNER: SERGIO HILL

MEDIA DESIGNER: ALEXIS DOMESTIC

COSTUME DESIGNER: REGAN CHOD

INDEX:

1. GP ACT I
2. SA SECTION
3. GP ACT I.2
1. GP ACT II
5. SL SECTION
6. GP ACT III
7. WALL A
8. WALLS B C D
3. SHADOW PIECES
10. FABRIC DROP
11. BOARDWALK POSTS & WEATHER SIGNAL
12. END CHAIRS & FIREPLACE
13. BENCHES AND MASSOCA
11. COFFEE TABLE, END TABLE, & WHEEL

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GENERAL NOTES:

No Notes at this time

THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH

INDEX

DATE: 1/20/15

SCALE:

MICHAELA LYNN STEIN

DIRECTOR: VIRGINIA SMITH

LIGHTING DESIGNER: SERGIO HILL

MEDIA DESIGNER: ALEXIS DOMESTIC

COSTUME DESIGNER: REGAN CHOD

0

OF 15

Figure D1: Drafting Packet Index

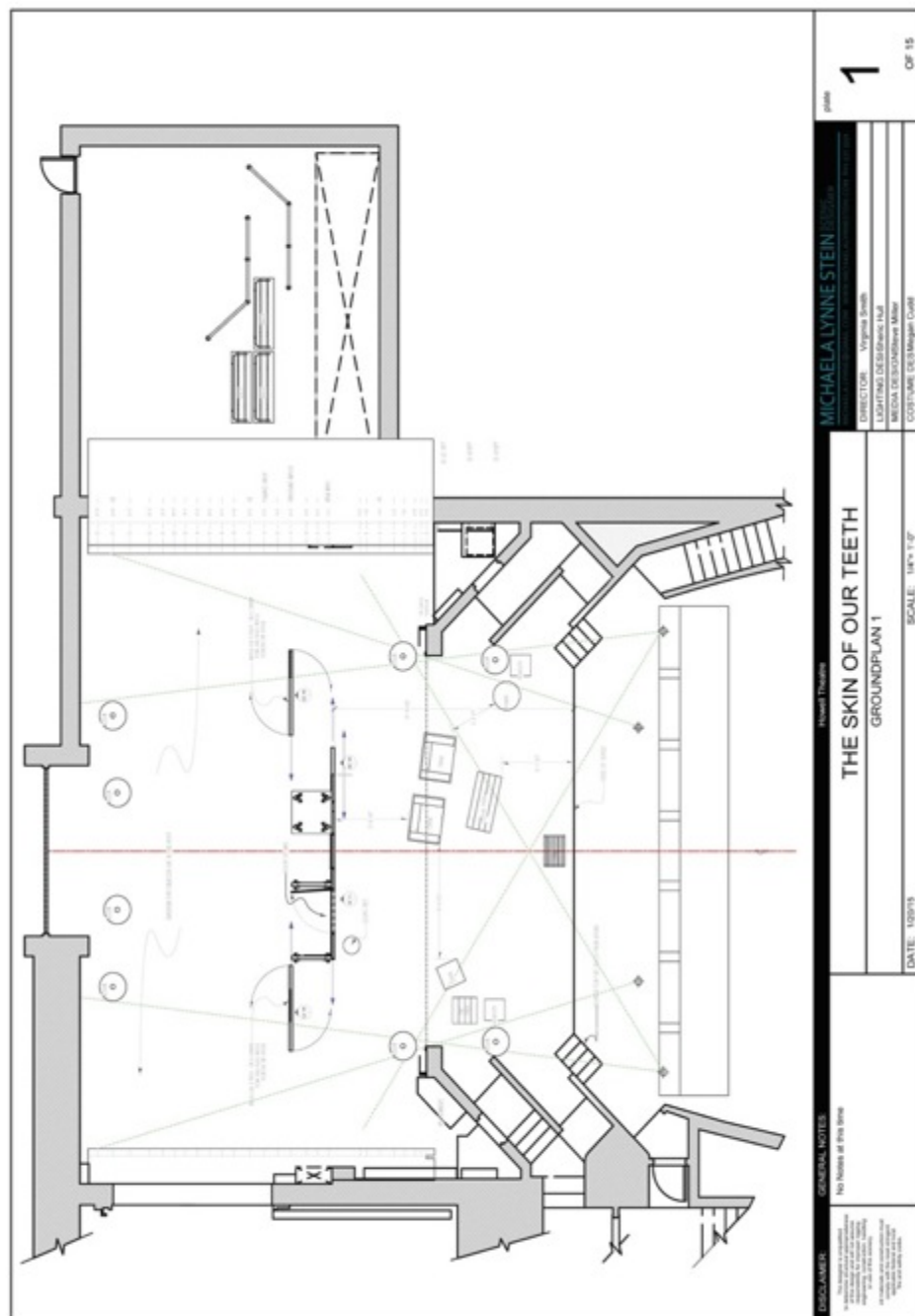


Figure D2: Drafting Plate 1

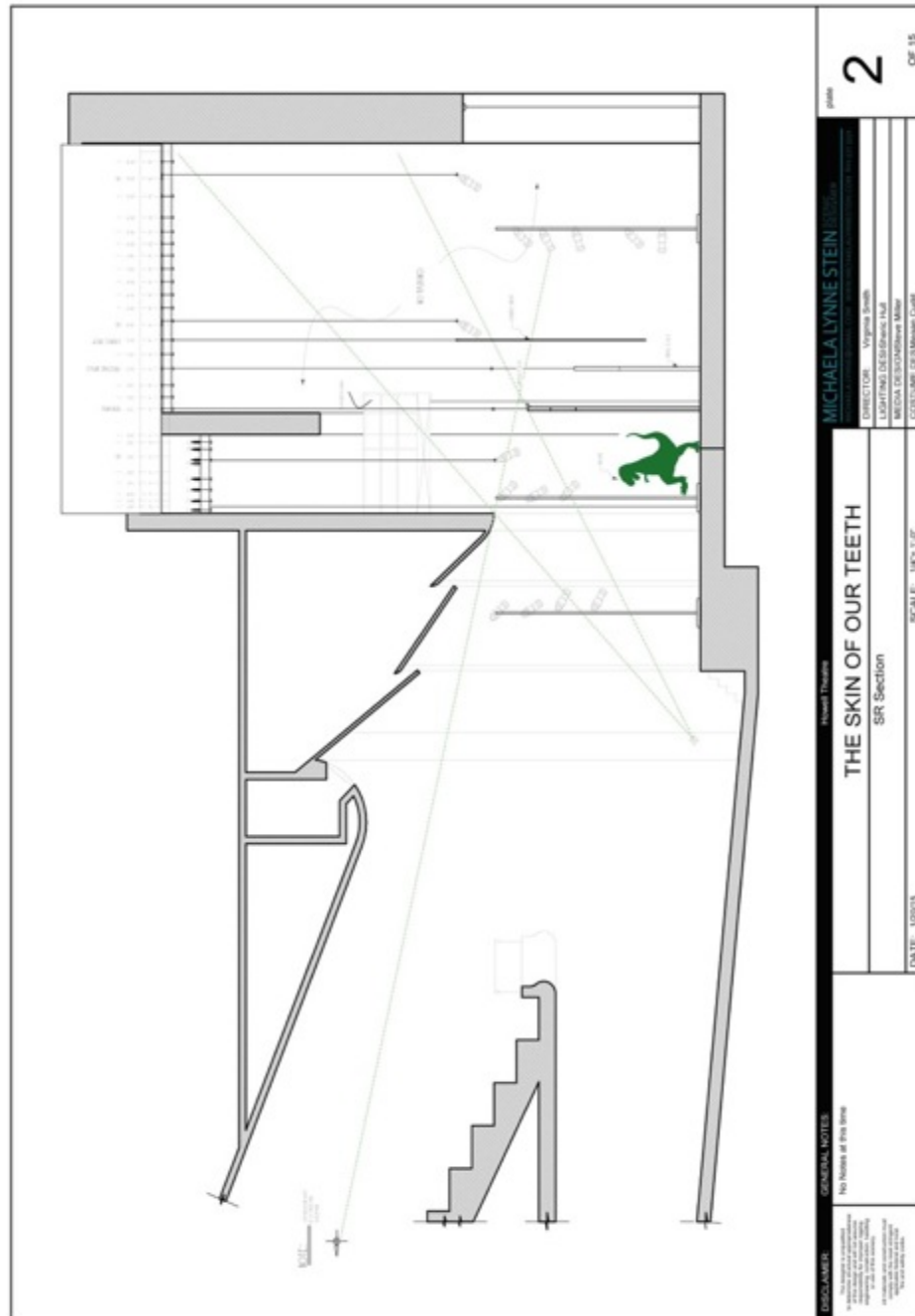


Figure D3: Drafting Plate 2

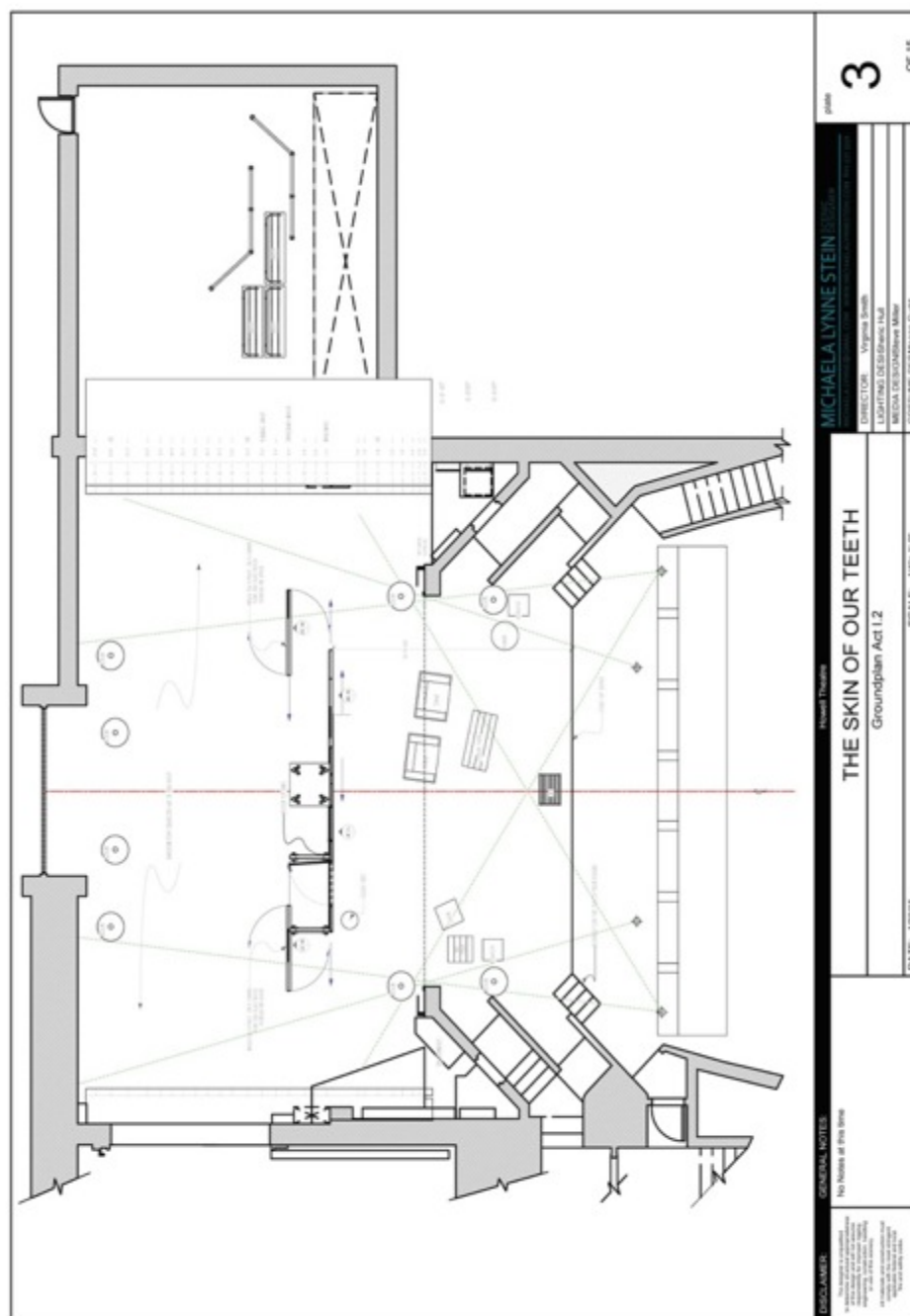


Figure D4: Drafting Plate 3

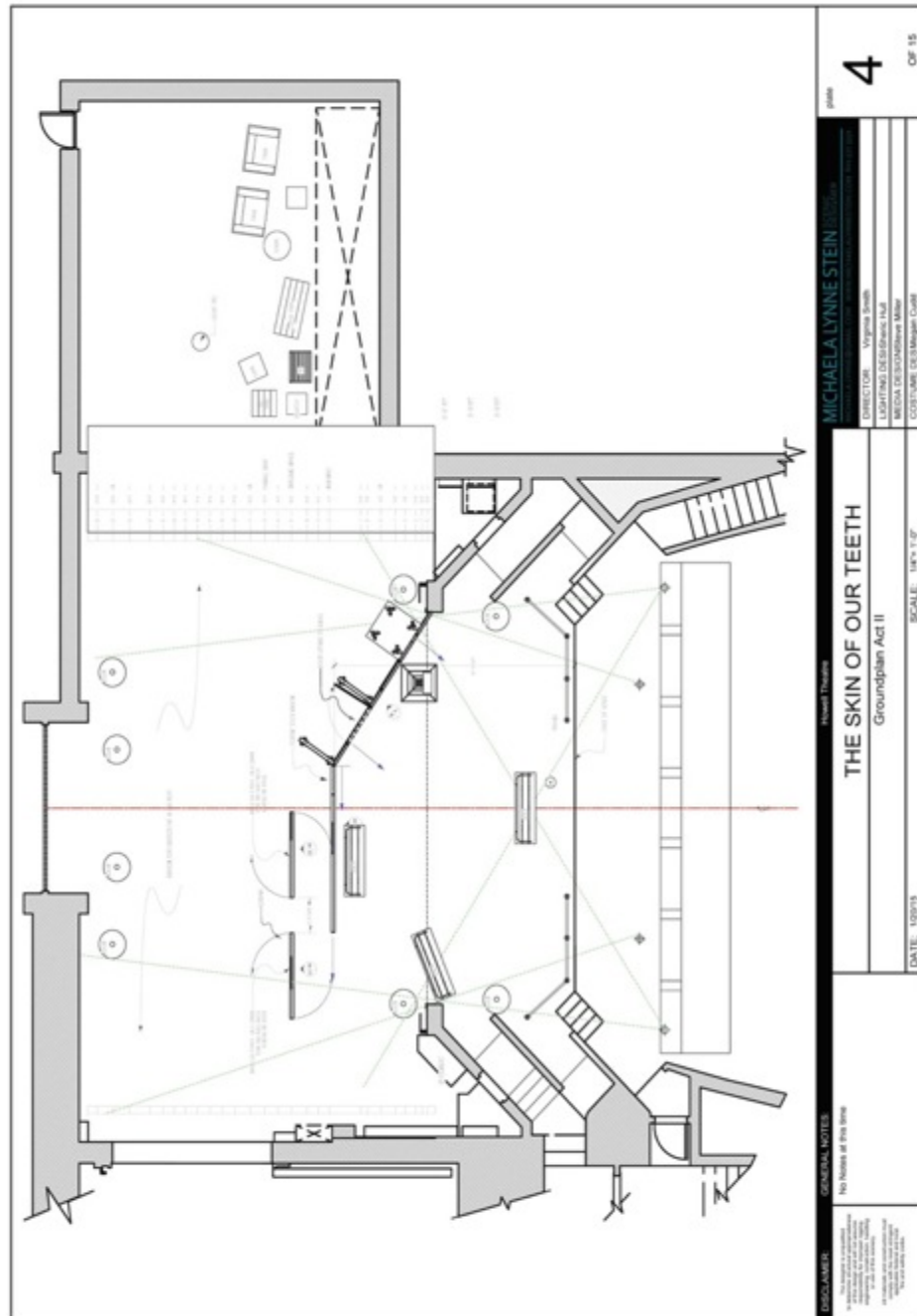


Figure D5: Drafting Plate 4

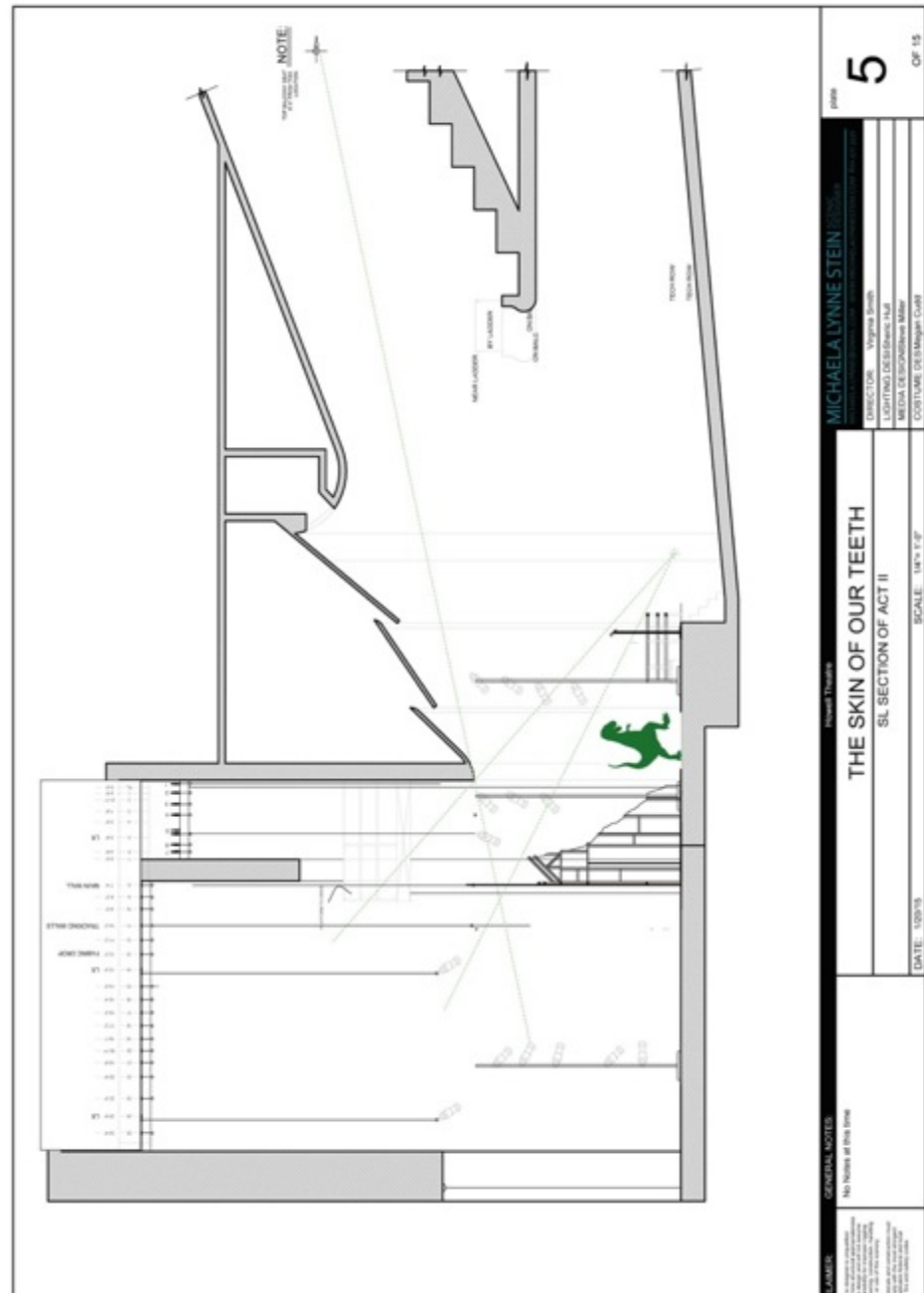


Figure D6: Drafting Plate 5

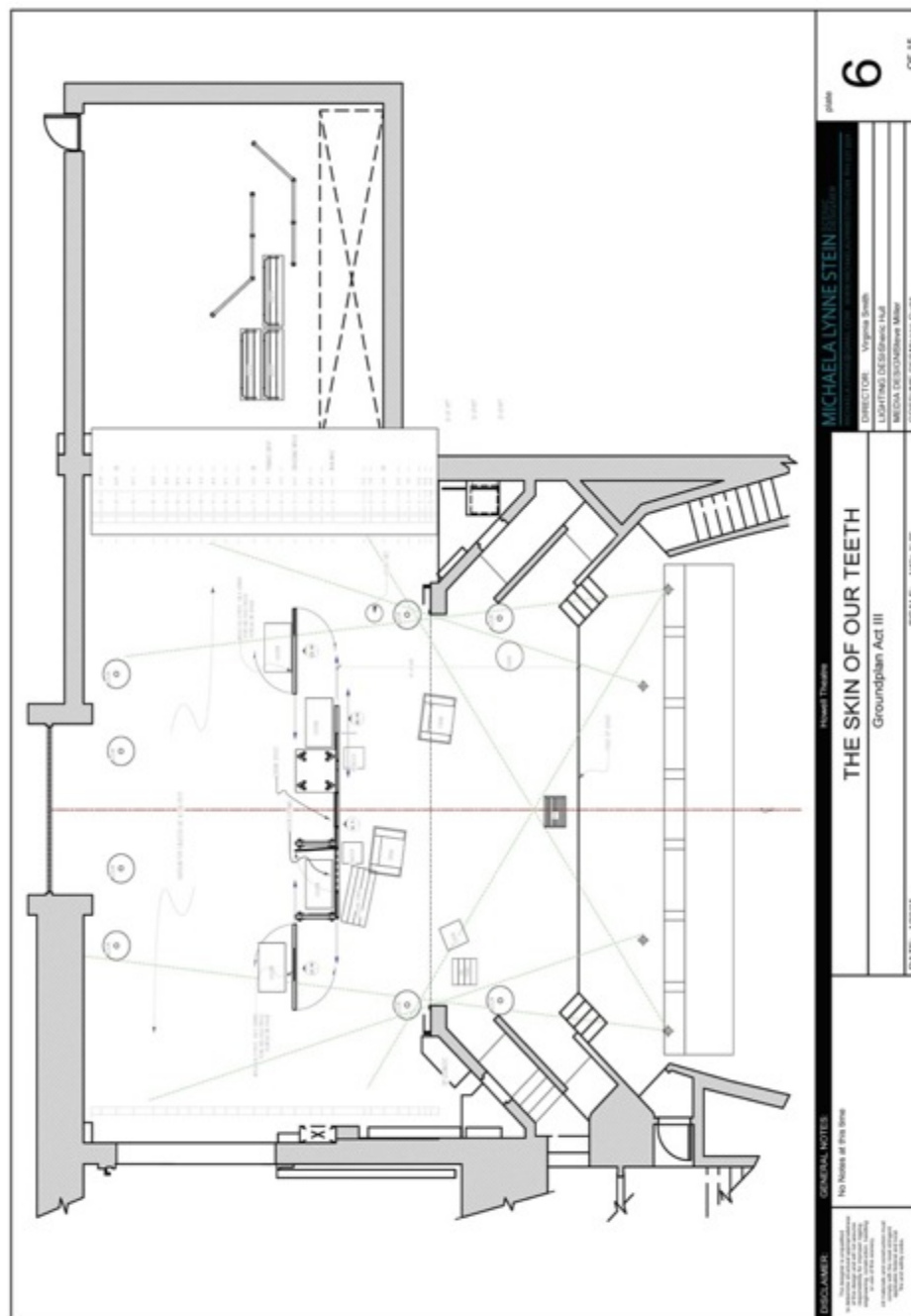


Figure D7: Drafting Plate 6

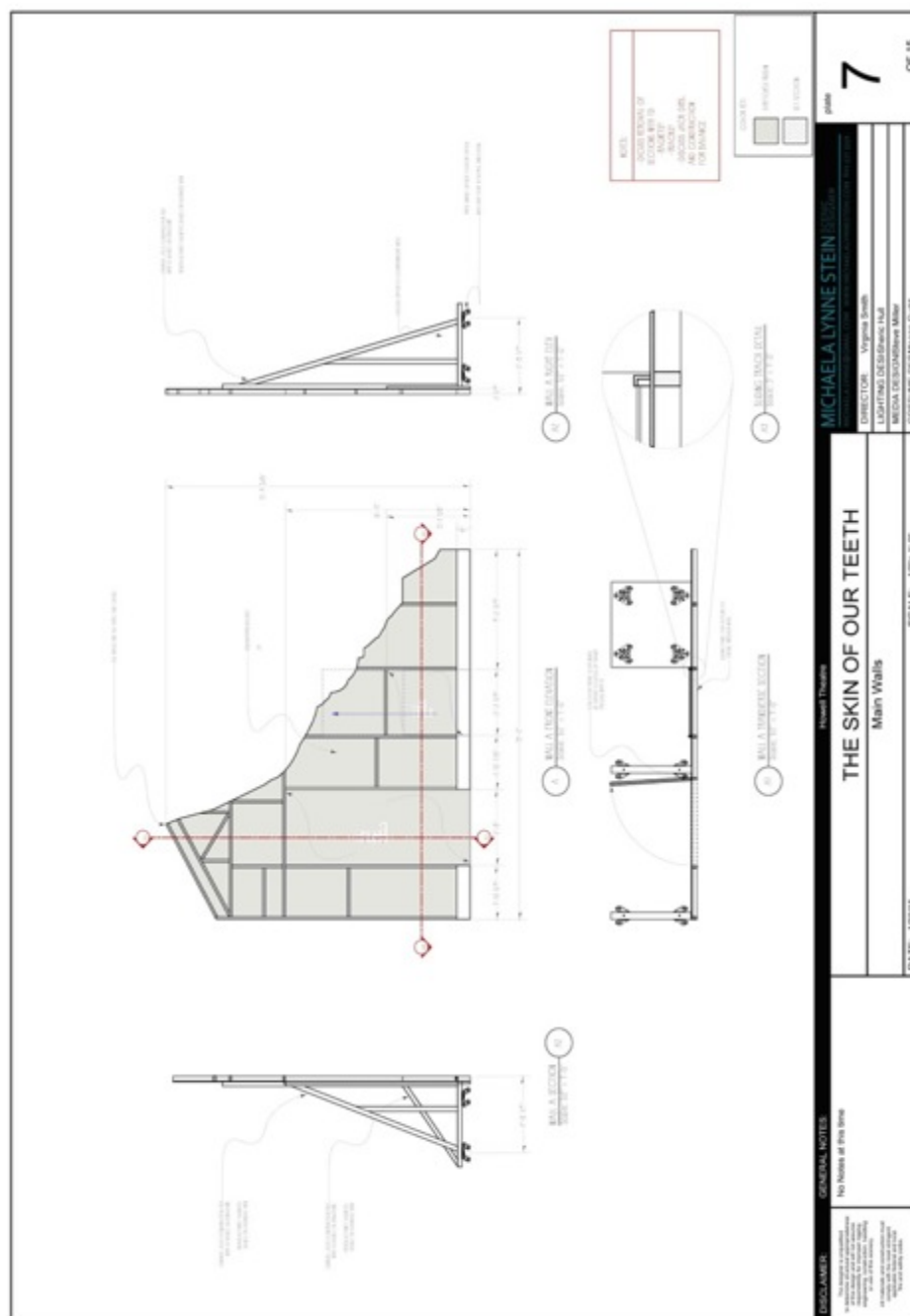


Figure D8: Drafting Plate 7

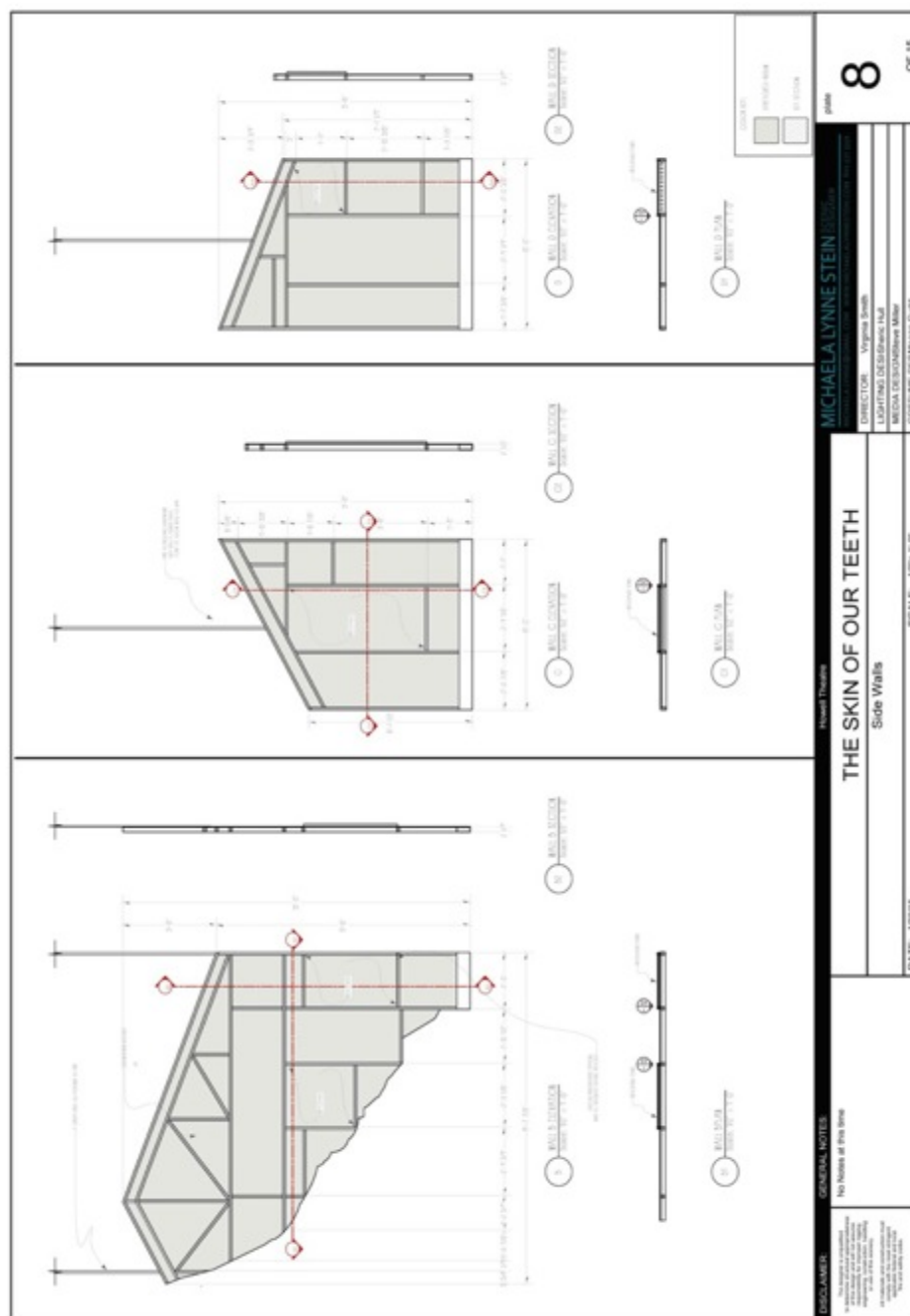


Figure D9: Drafting Plate 8

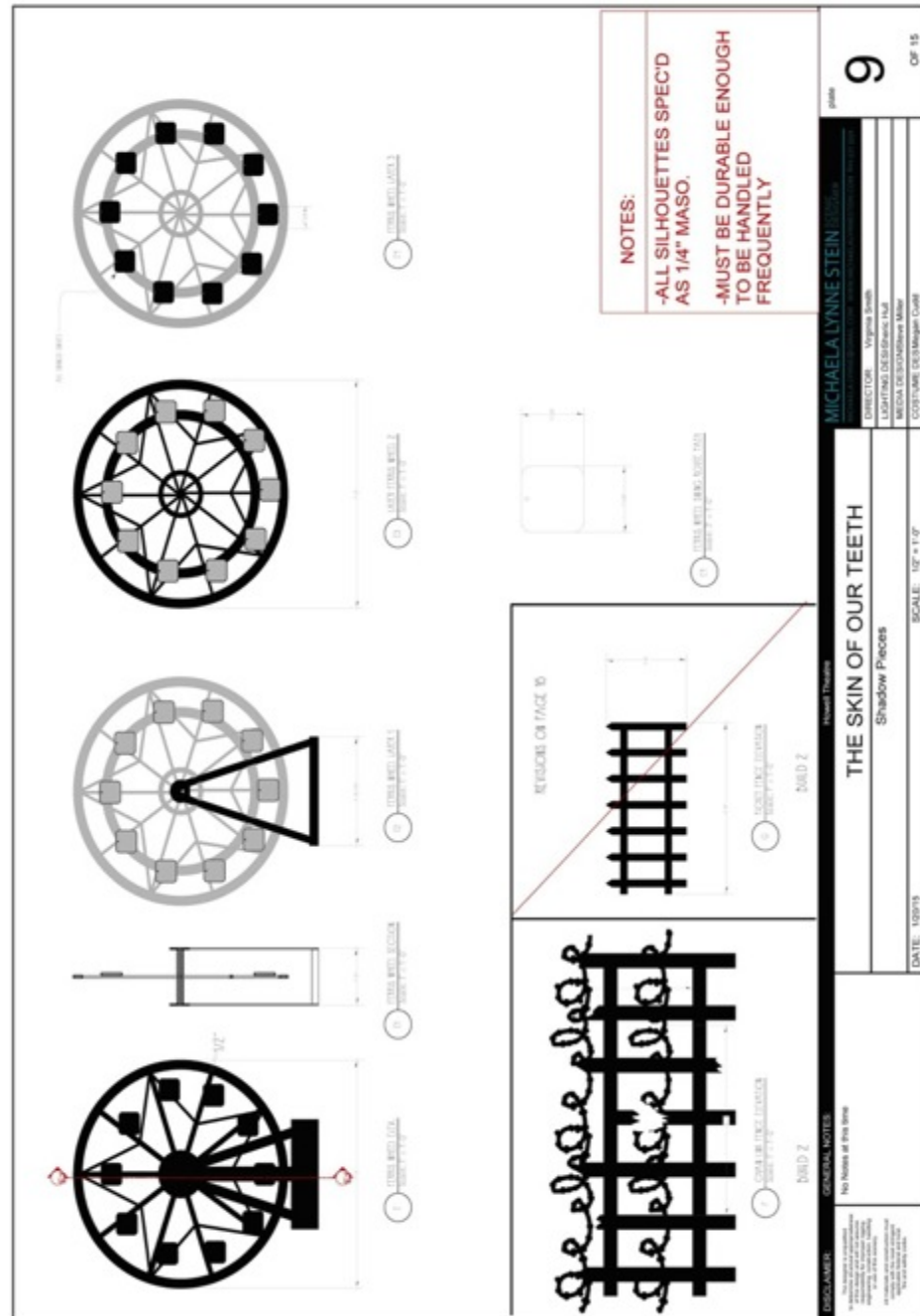


Figure D10: Drafting Plate 9



Figure D 11: Drafting Plate 10

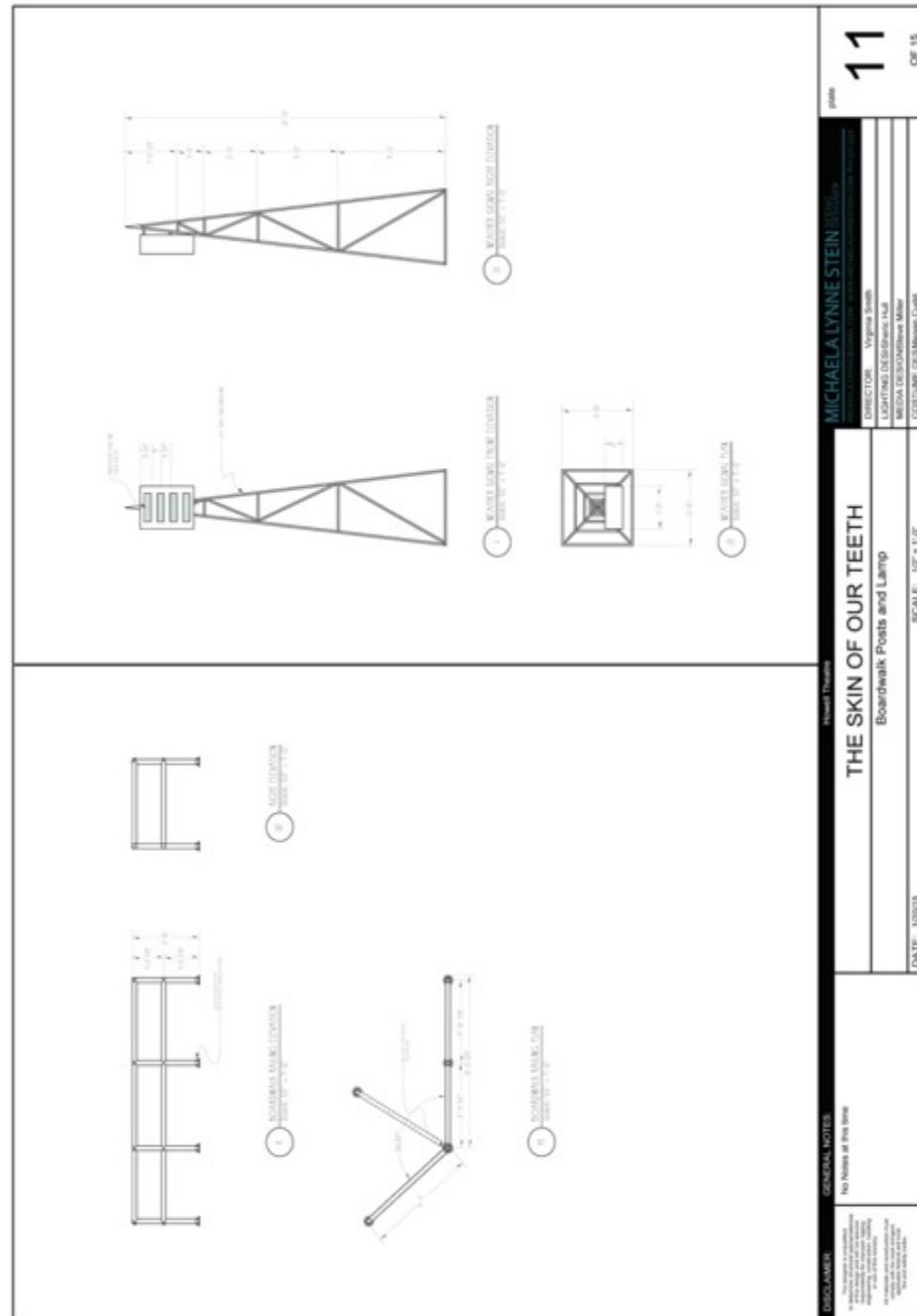


Figure D12: Drafting Plate 11

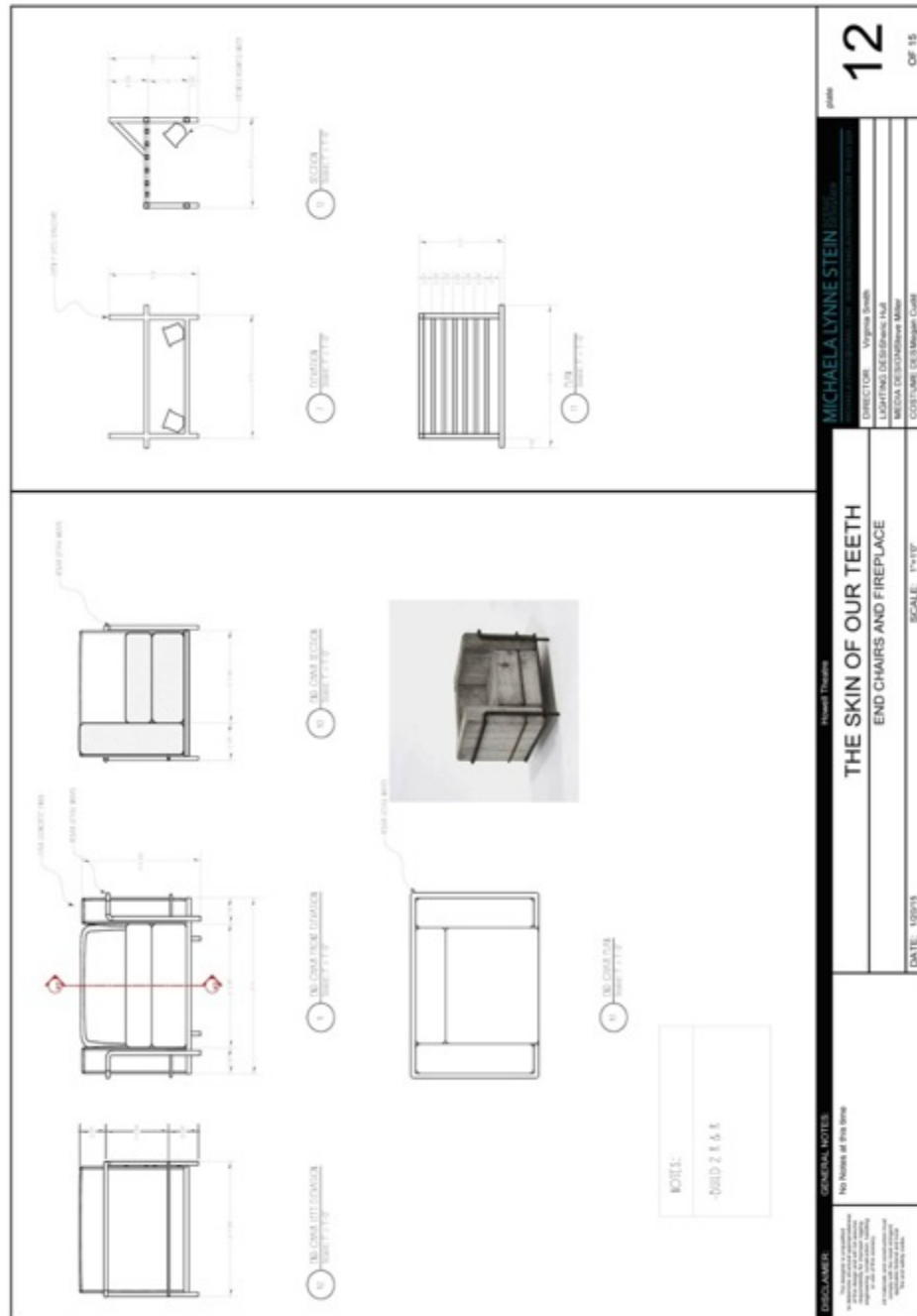


Figure D13: Drafting Plate 12

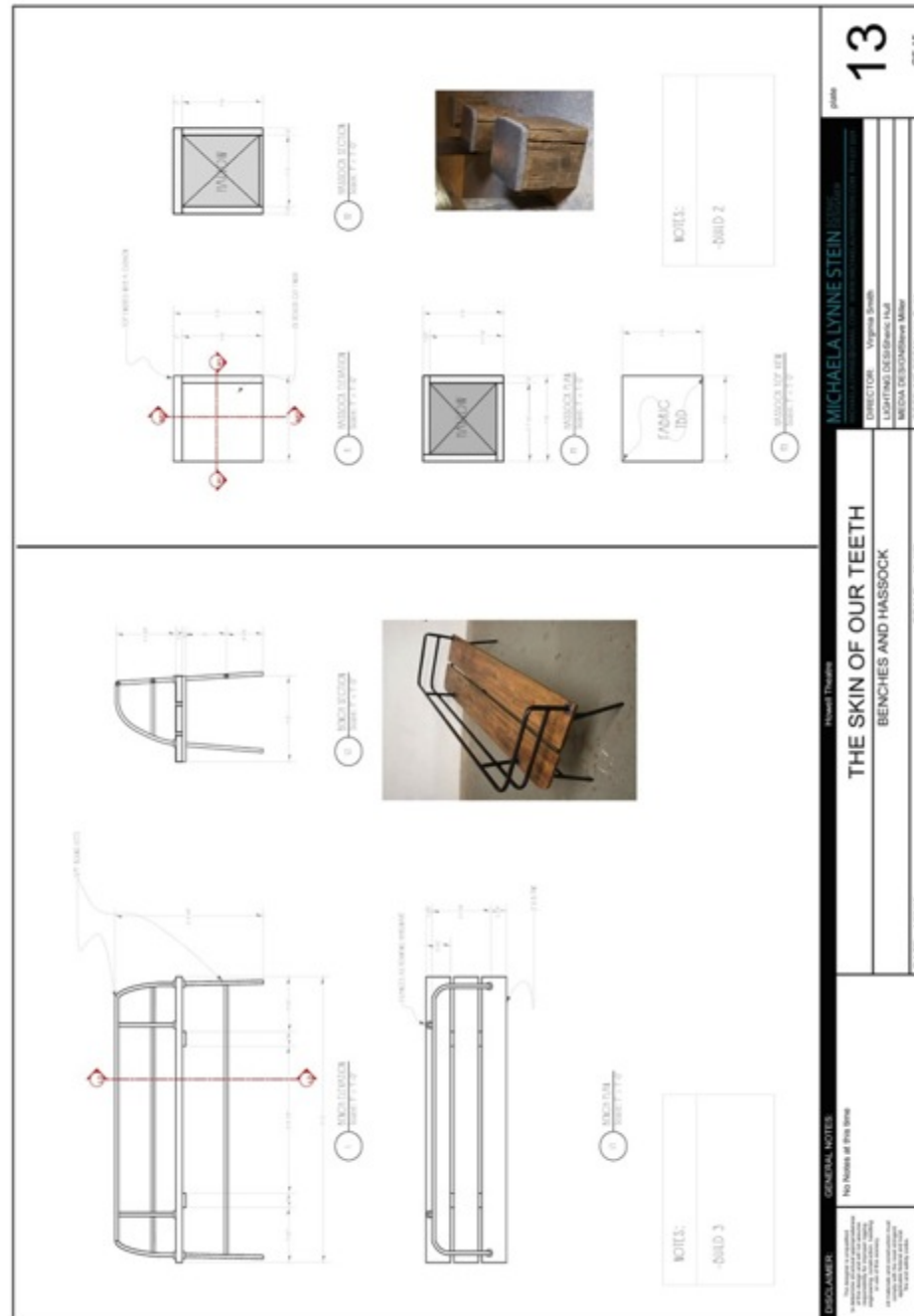


Figure D14: Drafting Plate 13

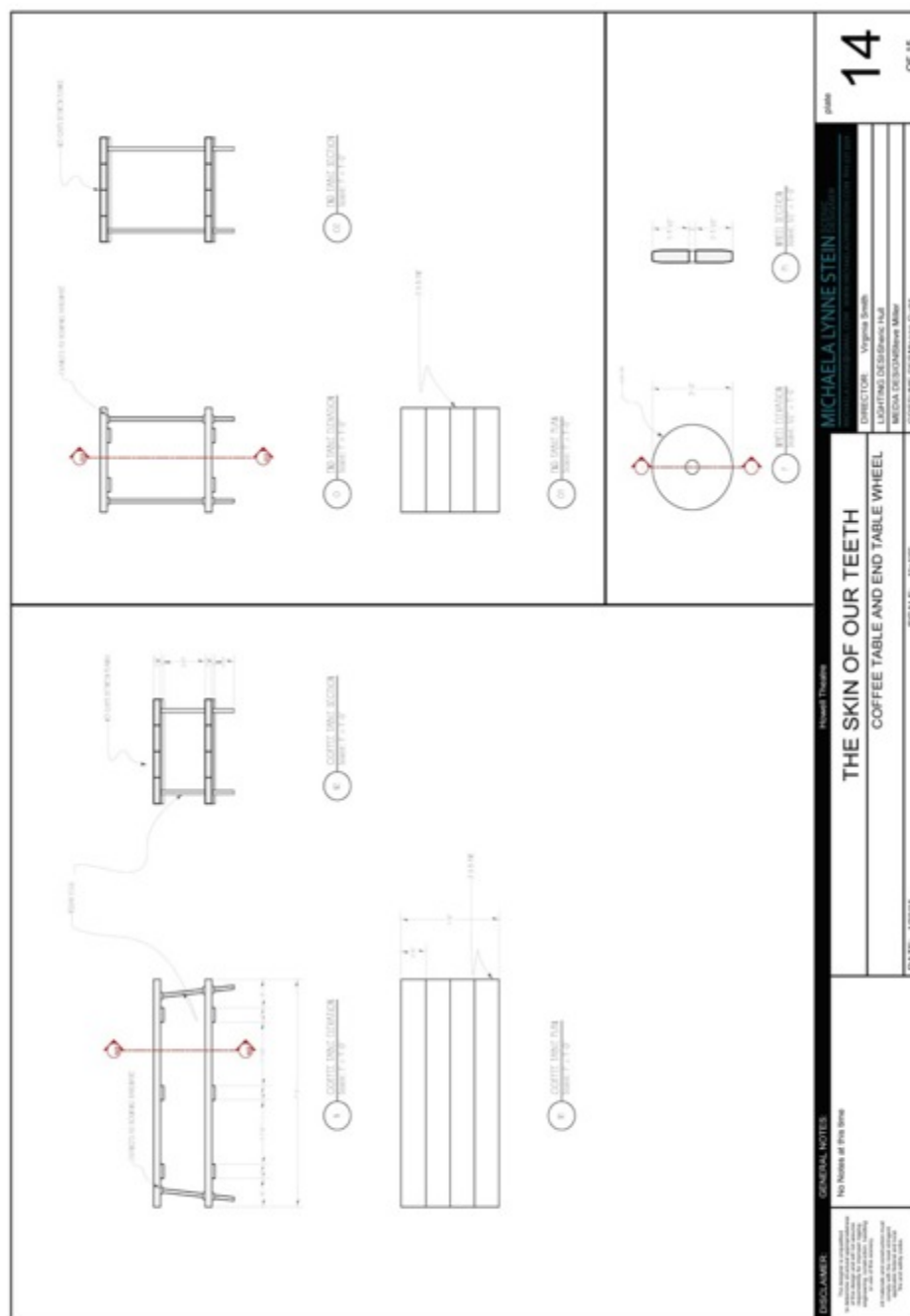
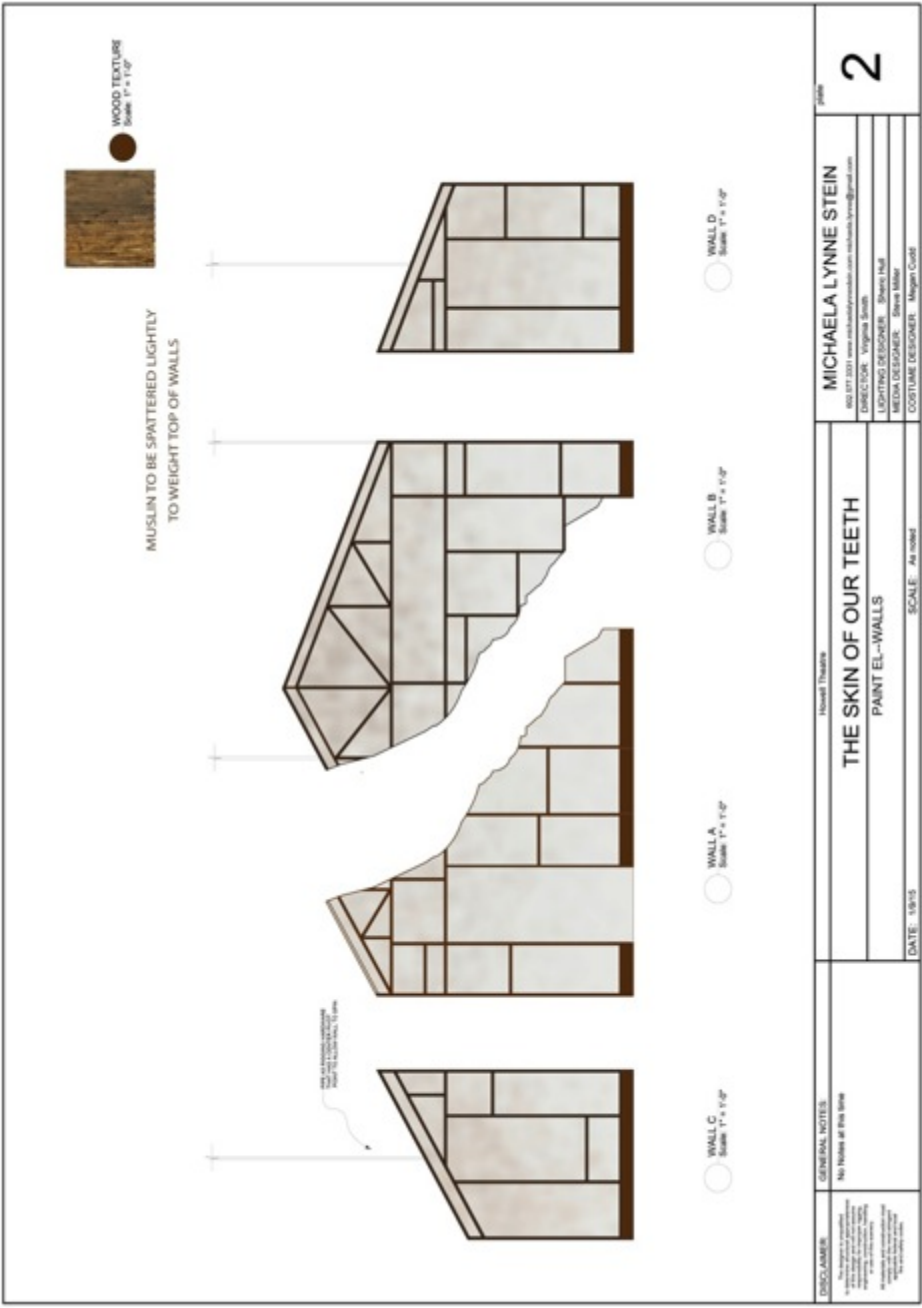


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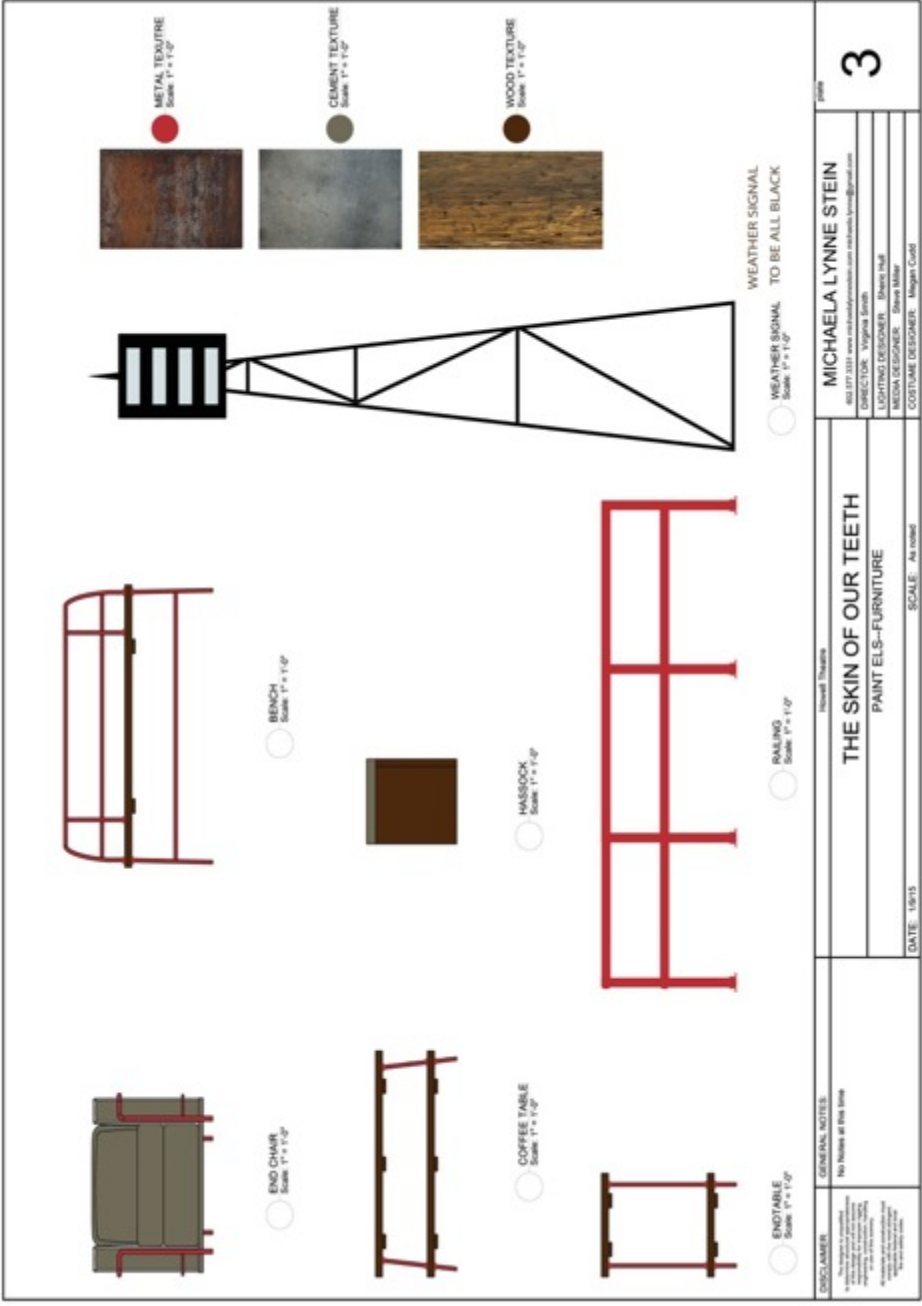


Figure D16: Paint Elevation 2



Figure D17: Paint Elevation 3

APPENDIX E: PRODUCTION PHOTOS

Figure E1: Act I Production Still



Figure E2: Act I Production Still with Silhouettes



Figure E3: Act II Production Still



Figure E4: Act III Production Still



Figure E5: Act III Production Still



Figure E5: Act III Production Still with the “Hours”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. "An Introduction to Brechtian Theatre." YouTube. YouTube, 26 July 2012. Web. Oct. 2014.
2. "Pinterest." Pinterest. N.p., n.d. Web. Sept. 2014.