

Art & Design Portfolio

Jason Palmer (He/Him)

Artist & Designer

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

Detroit, MI

Contents:

- Art/craft Work (1-6)
- Design Practice (7-12)
- Design Research (13-16)
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- Image Making (22-24)
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Art/craft Work

Information regarding skill in various mediums of art and craft (painting, carpentry, metalwork, sculpture, and fabrication).

Light House, (work-in-progress)

An autoethnography written during the slow restoration of an old home on Detroit's westside. This involves traditional craft methods of carpentry, plasterwork, metalwork, glasswork, ect.



Light House Title Sequence, 2026
Lightbox, acrylic pieces, Aftereffects
30 x 30 inches

Returning Home; Or A Short Pilgrimage, 2025-2026

Source Materials:

Stringers: California Red Cedar

Keel: Michigan White Cedar

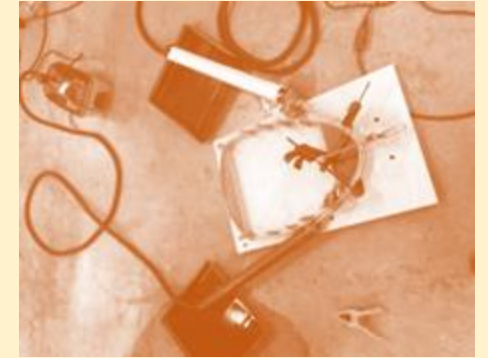
Sections: Okoume marine plywood

Skin: Ballistic Nylon coated with organic polyurethane (as water sealant and to prevent shedding of microplastics); dyed using earth pigments.

Seat and Coaming: Red Oak (salvaged from 100-year-old Detroit floorboards dumped on my lawn)



Sea Kayak, 2025
Skin on wood frame
18' x 20" x 14"



Process Images (Top-to-bottom:
Steam bending the coaming, Skinning
the frame)

Thanks, 2024

A rocking chair made using traditional hand-craft methods and given to a friend (a Swede) upon completion. The seat is a traditional Shaker weave and in keeping with tradition, a note is left between the webbing to be found during its reweaving. It reads out a line from Thoreau's *Walden*: "an appointment with a beech tree, or a yellow birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines."



Hans Wagner J16 Replica, 2024
American Beech and cotton webbing
18 x 20 x 40 inches



Process Images
(Left-to right: Lathe work, Steam bending, Parts assembly)

Labor's..., 2018-2024

This is a life size model of a fetus in the late stages of gestation. It is made of one-half of a radiator salvaged from an old home in Detroit, Michigan.



Process Images (Top-to-bottom: Mold-making process, Foundry iron pour)



Model Fetus (1:1), 2024
Cast Iron
14 x 8 x 8 inches



Process Images (Top-to-bottom: Clay sculpture, 3D scan, 3D print)

Wind(s), 2023

A replicate of a South American Seed pod sits conspicuously at a scale of 300:1. It is the seed of *Loasa chilensis* that grows in the high mountain altitudes of Chile. It is a long way from home. It looks the way it does so that it can catch the wind and travel through the air to communicate itself over long distances and find a suitable place to live. Connected are the strings that give description to where and why it came (not shown here). The piece calls attention to the ecological disaster occurring in South America and the ties that relate that disaster to our own homeland.

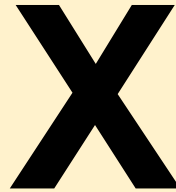


Process Images (Top-to bottom: CAD model with Laser cut MDF pieces, Assembly of first island)

The Seed Pod of a South American Wildflower (300:1), 2024
Masonite, plaster, acrylics, and adhesive
25 x 18 x18 inches

Us, 2015-2018

10 large mixed media paintings.



Images Temporarily Removed ;)

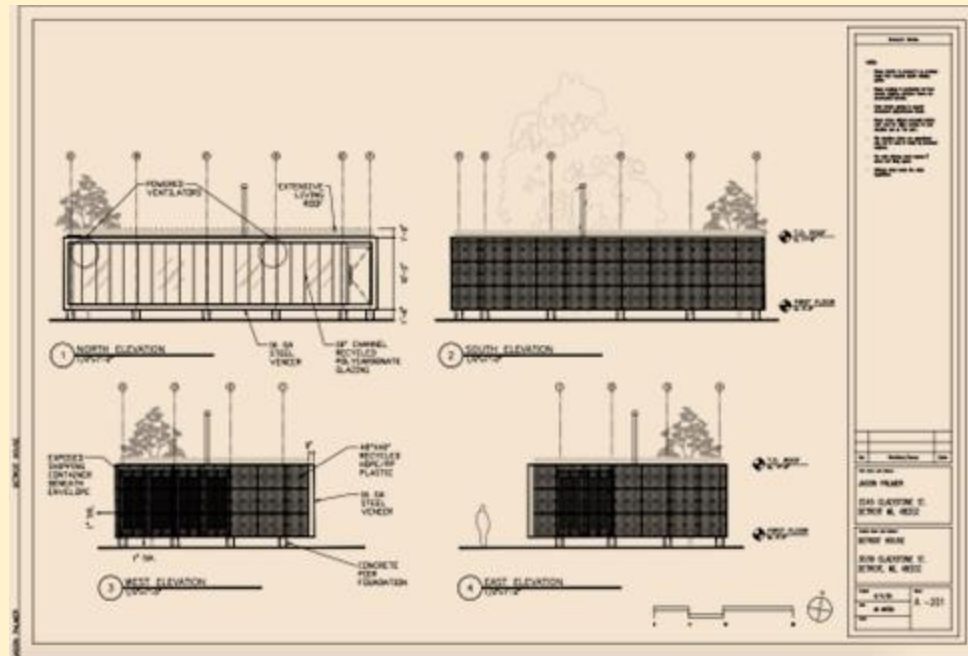


Design Practice

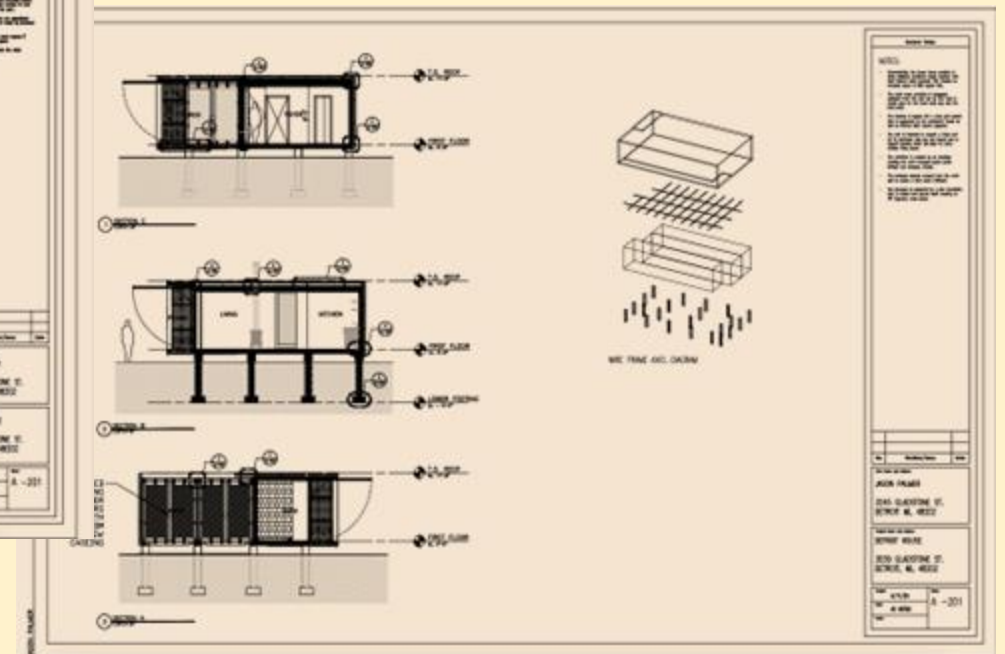
Information on design projects in the areas of theatre, architecture, and media production.

Sister House (2025)

An architectural design for a sustainable house; to be built using recycled and reused materials and situated in Nova Scotia, Canada. The images show part of a set of standardized architectural drawings. This project is currently in development and is scheduled to be completed in...the future.



Drafted Plate of Exterior Elevations, 2025
AutoCAD
36 x 24 inches



Drafted Plate of Volumetric Study, 2025
AutoCAD
36 x 24 inches

Set Design for *Marcus; Or the Secret of the Sweet*, 2023

This set design was commissioned by Wayne State University. It became the subject of a larger design investigation and research paper (page 15).



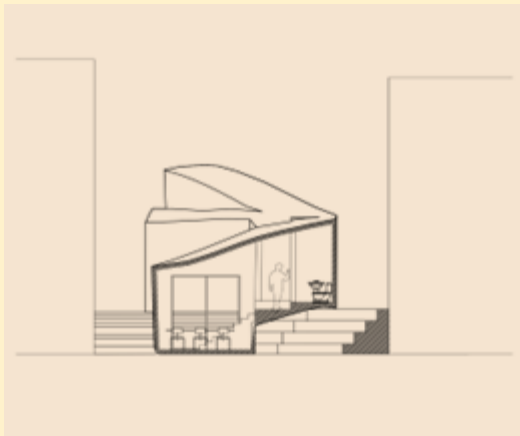
Marcus; Or the Secret of the Sweet, 2023
Production Photo, Stage Right View



Marcus; Or the Secret of the Sweet, 2023
Production Photo, Stage Left View

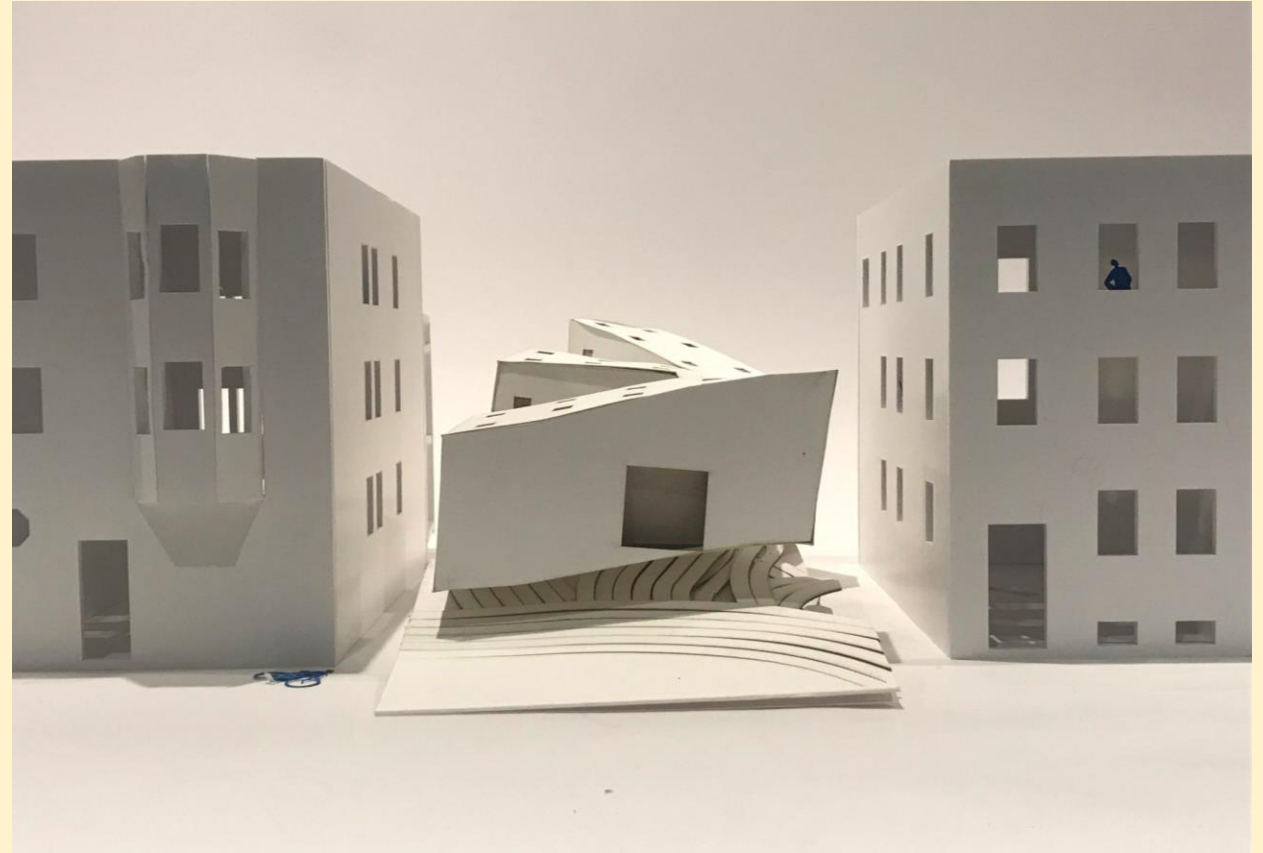
Harvard Design Discovery Program Project, 2021

As part of a summer program in design thinking, the following project shows my design of a community center for a residential area in Boston, MA.



Front Elevation with Section, 2021
CAD Rendering (Rhino)
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Argument: "This space (defined as community center) anticipates both present publics and a future public. The design services the need for a community gathering space and would provide a variety of (specific and intentionally chosen) public programs. At the same time, it provides a spatial organizational scheme that promotes public intersection and effective discourse in an envisioned reality where constant negotiation between present socio-political conditions and prescient eco-political needs exists. The layering of these specifically chosen publics and this specific spatial organizational scheme will help to create a new and cohesive activist public."



Model of a Communal Space, 2021
Laser Cut Paper
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Pression; A Spatial Poem, 2021

A collaborative art installation and performance cut short. The piece expressed a child's perspective of the Covid-19 pandemic through multiple mediums (spoken word, kinetic theatrical sculpture, and projected visual media). The piece dealt with the themes of anxiety and cyberspace. The experience led to a new 3D design experiential (page 19).



Projections Design Screenshot , 2021
Blender and Adobe AfterEffects

Creative Team:

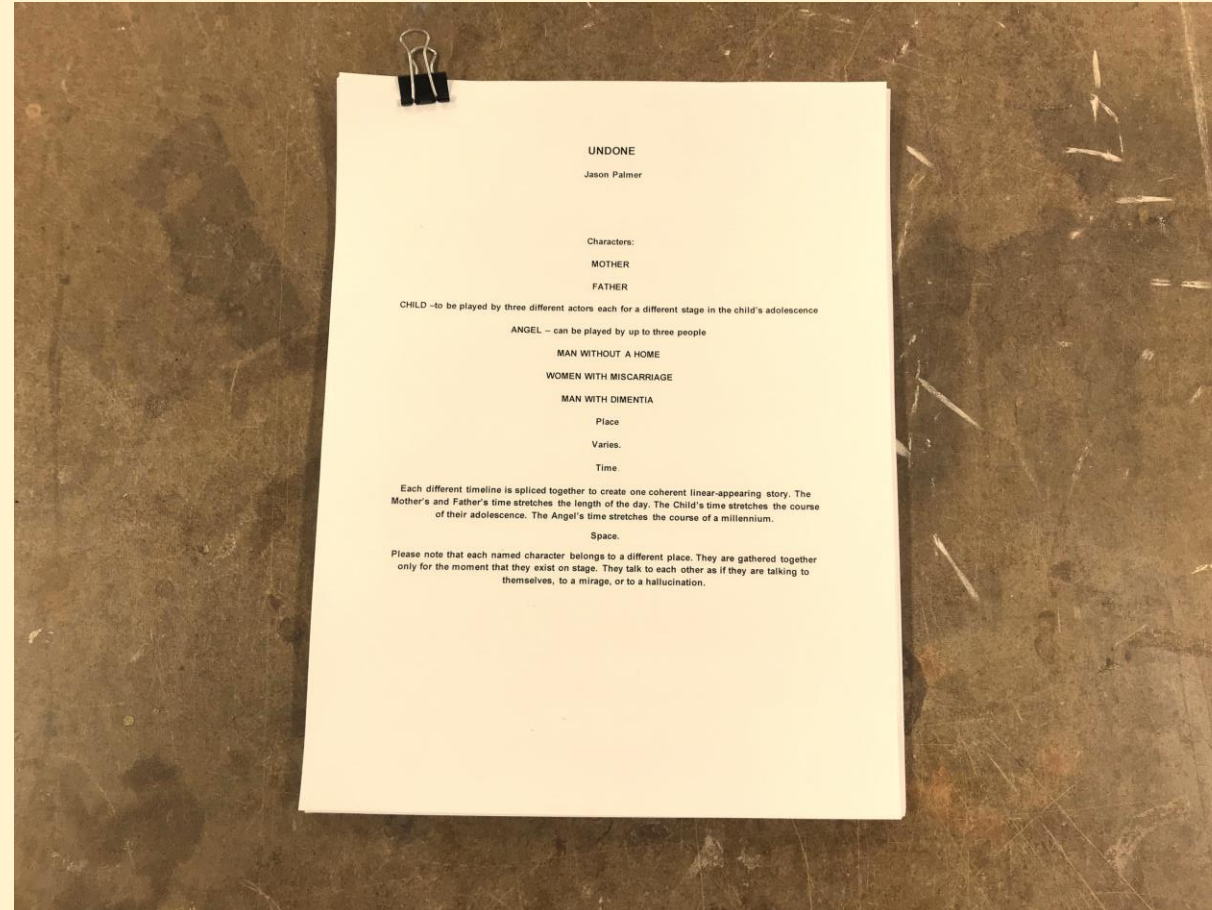
Art Director: Jason Palmer
Playwright: Canitera R.
Scenic Head: Mike C.
Scenic Assistant: Logan B.
Lighting Design: Nico S.
Electrician: Cat F.
Sound Design: Jacob G.
Projection Design: Jason Palmer



A Production photograph from the last tech rehearsal.

Undone, 2020-2021

A narrative design and original play. Produced by Wayne State Theatre Department and the recipient of the Heck Rabi award.



Final script revision of *Undone*, 2020



Design Research

*This is information relating to ongoing art/design research.**

**an ambiguous category understood here as work that required a language-based analysis for proper reflection or communication (or a method for articulating tricky embodied thoughts; those needing to be laid out, gestured at, and/or moved around using the thinking tool of written language before they can be mapped fully by the mind). Each follows an investigative research style and APA format.*

Design investigation of Set Design for *Marcus; Or the Secret of the Sweet*

This investigation was prompted by my work during the set design of *Marcus' Or the Secret of the Sweet*, which was completed in 2023. The design reconceptualized the environment as an actor and thereby redefined the traditional dramaturgic development of the play's action by focusing on the relationship between actor and environment. This set was also the impetus for a design research proposal (not included).

Theatrical Set Design as Situated Consciousness: Mending Western Epistemological Error Between Body and Environment through Indigenous Knowledge and Interactive Technology.

Jason A. Palmer

"The way in which something is coded determines the kind of errors you can get."
-Mary Catherine Bateson

Abstract

The following is a design investigation that takes the reader through a description and explanation of a set design as I originally conceived it and considers my thoughts and intentions on how it might best be used. This design and its investigation are framed within a problem of communication and addresses the question of how to best deliver a particular message in the medium of theatre set design. The investigation elaborates on how the set design attempts to obtain more accurate representation and provide better communication of the play's message by a reconceptualization of place inspired by theories of situated cognition and embodied consciousness. The means of representation thus designed and its communication, is considered as an improved model for theatrical and multimodal communication generally in the following ways: (1) as allowing for meaning to be more accurately related between two distinct epistemologies with an effect that helps to recapitulate the predominantly western conceptualization of mind, body, and environment, (2) as allowing intrapersonal drama to be visualized, (3) by drawing a distinction and demarcation between verbal and nonverbal communication that allows for its examination, (4) by presenting the set as a thinking tool it promotes the idea of *environmental mediation* and its role in critical thinking, and (5) it promotes a non-binary thinking model. As it concludes, the paper argues that by a design that repositions theatre under contemporary phenomenological terms it offers, from its multimodal communication, a model of interaction that has a higher potential to expand understanding and communicate knowing with a higher degree of efficacy.

Introduction

When asked about set design, a person may think of a decorative backdrop, of a painterly landscape or of 2D flats arranged around a theater stage. If they are familiar with the theatre, they know it as a much more involved process that requires much planning, organization, and engineering. But regardless of their expertise, set design is always considered a secondary feature that lends support to the primary action of the play done by actors. Afterall, this is where most meaning is made; by their interactions, gestures, and voice. And all organized by the words of the script. This is the tradition at least, and it reflects the conception of the world it was born out of, that is, one that separates mind, body and environment. Set



Marcus; Or the Secret of the Sweet, 2023
Production photo (stage left view)

Reconceptualization of Set Design and Peer Review through Set Design

This paper was prompted by a publication by Chris Westgate, entitled *Toward a Rhetoric of Sociospatial Theatre: José Rivera's "Marisol."* It is a response to his definition of a "sociospatial theatre," one alluded to in the script of *Marisol* by *José Rivera*. With this set design, I developed a visuospatial language from the built environment to support and enhance the script's meaning. The kinetic and multi-scene set is both a material representation of actor's psyche and a traditional means of scenic representation.

Describing a World: The Impact of a Narrative on Space, Objects, and Psyche

Abstract

This paper provides an analysis of Jose Rivera's play *Marisol*, and illustrates how it reconsiders staged reality. The paper shows how *Marisol* calls on the set to fit the spatial conditions implicated within the script which ultimately calls for a reconceptualization of set design. This set design is one that pushes beyond a traditional depiction of the play's representative environment or emotional atmosphere and towards a depiction of a materialized eco-psychological diagram and tool to be read by the audience and to serve as guide in the analysis of character and meaning. This paper is also a response to this reconceptualization and presents a description and analysis of a set design for *Marisol* that meets the playwright's needs for a "sociospatial theatre," that is, a set that represents the narrative in terms of a physical and social environment.

Understanding Rivera's *Marisol*

Marisol is a play written by Jose Rivera and first performed in 1992. Shortly after it was written, it received an Obie Award. The play is considered to be a reflection and political statement responding to the New York crisis of homelessness and the resulting identity politics carried out in spatial terms across the city by governing officials. In order to represent the issue, Riviera constructs a psychologically layered play that draws direct connection between spatial conflict, the destructive socio-cultural narrative, and the psychotic break of its protagonist, *Marisol*. To do this Riviera takes a much more active approach to the role of space and its demarcation as a tool to convey the conflict inherent within society. To appreciate the complexity of script the audience must be attentive to not just the logic of language but also the logic of space. When



Marisol Paper Model (1 of 6), 2021
3D prints, paper, paint, and cardstock
12 x 12 x 12 inches

Design Research: Theatre and Design Theory Curriculum Proposal

Prompted by my experience as artistic director during my final graduate project and influenced by my cumulative graduate experience as a set designer, I created a curriculum proposal that outlined a method for integrating design thinking methodologies into the teaching and practice of theatre. The aim was additionally to provide an avenue for social justice training.

Going off Script: Using Theatre to Teach Experience-based Design Thinking and Social Activism

Design thinking: "A set of both mindsets and design-based activities that foster the collaboration required to solve problems in human-centered ways." – IDEO on design thinking

Abstract

During this semester-long course, groups of students would engage in a studio and research based project. The project would make use of a small scale, modularized and transportable theater for the creation of original student led theatre performances. The topic and script of the performance would be decided on by each student group but must be of social and cultural relevance. Performances will then be staged by the student group within locations and audiences that are socially and contextually relevant to the chosen topic. During the creation of this project students would engage in the analysis of individual and group design processes. The purpose of this curriculum is to gain a foundational and experience-based understanding of design thinking, social activism, and human ecology as well as to appreciate these concepts as inherent to, and a potential of, theatre practice.

This curriculum has been developed under the following premises:

- An education that develops with current socio-cultural relevance affects a more student driven and socially conscious learning outcome.
- Theatre design that removes the traditional script and replaces it with a student created one, allows students to develop and improve upon a more nuanced set of human-centered design and collaboration skills.



Projections Design Photo, 2021
Adobe AfterEffects

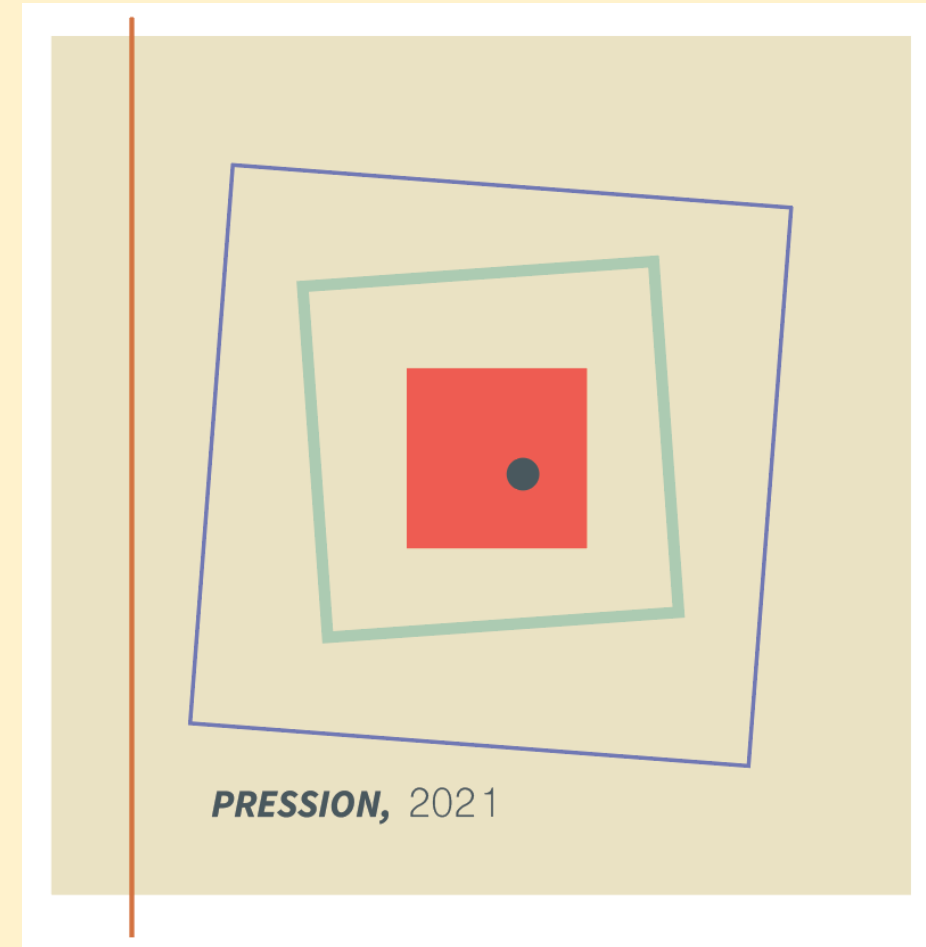


Teaching Practice

Information on curriculum, lesson design, and student work in foundation courses (3D Design and Modeling & Animation) to demonstrate skills in pedagogy design, teaching and mentorship.

3D Design Experiential

An "experience booklet" that introduces students to 3D design as mediation while investigating the subject of AI ethics. In the format of an experimental, students are guided through the construction of a 3D model, using riddles and parables to investigate the relationships between image and text, the material and the immaterial, and subjective and objective experience. The topics are then related to the quality of lived experience and the role that design plays in shaping our definition of what it is to be human. This piece was made under the advisement of Vince Carducci, PhD.



Exercise Booklet Cover, 2025
Print on paper
10 x 10 x 10 inches

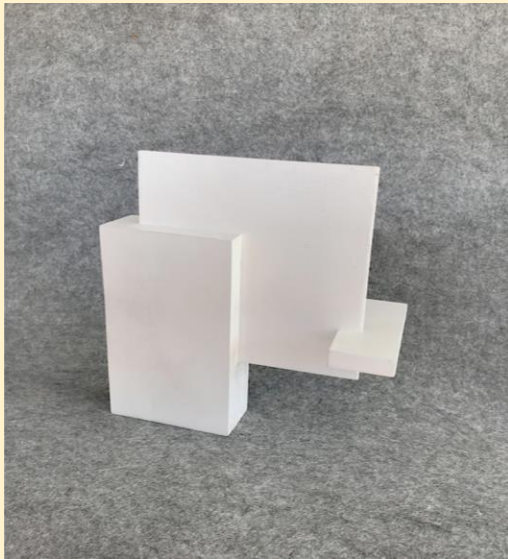
Curriculum and Lesson Design (work-in-process)

An original 3D design lesson book based on my time teaching 3D design at a community college in Michigan. Among other things, it is an investigation into design generally. It consists of ten play-based "constructions" each with its own proposition, that builds towards a certain philosophical conclusion about the act of making and being.

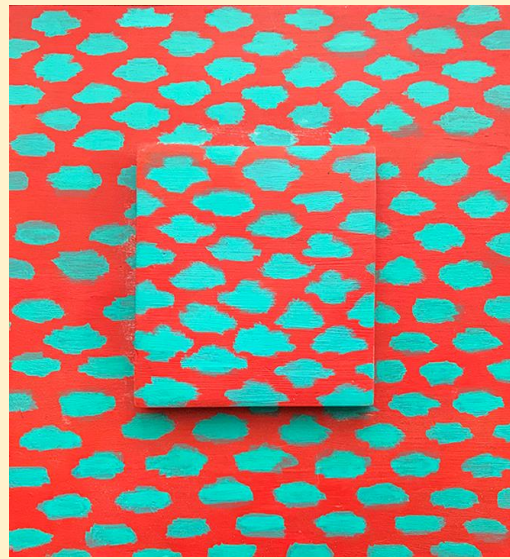


Messy Desk + 3D Curriculum, 2021

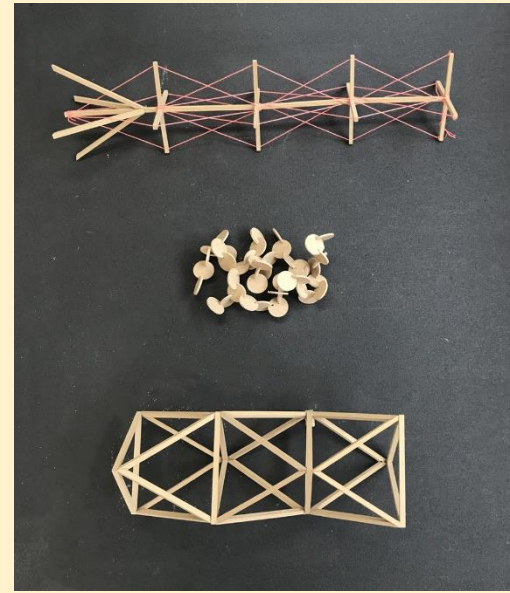
Foundation Course in 3D Design: Class Models



Class Example, Rowena Kostellow
Principles of Design Exercises, 2023
Acrylic paint on plywood
8 x 2 x 8 inches



Class Example, Visual Perception
Assignment, 2022
Acrylic paint on plywood
8 x 8 x 8 inches

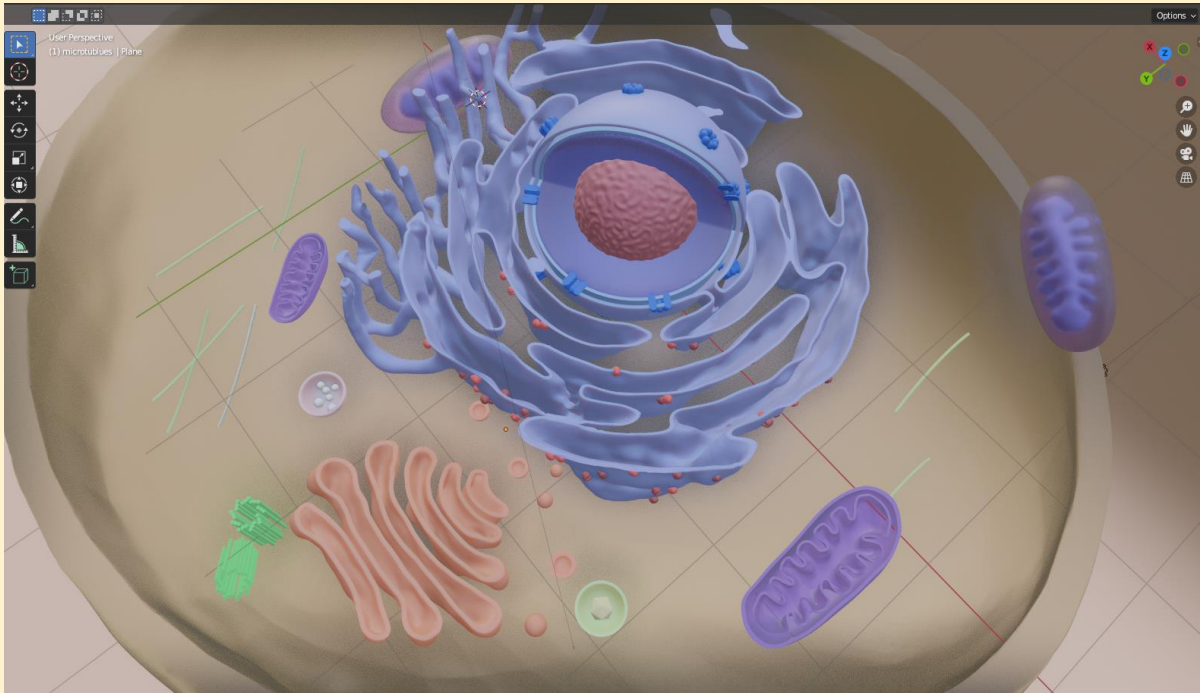


Class Examples, Simple
Structures Assignment, 2023
Masonite and string
14 x 8 x 8 inches



Class Example, Growth Algorithm of
Snow Crystal Assignment, 2024
Acrylic sheets,
8 x 8 x 20 inches

Foundation Course in 3D Modeling & Animation: Student Examples



Concept Model of Animal Cell Assignment, 2023
Blender, Screenshot



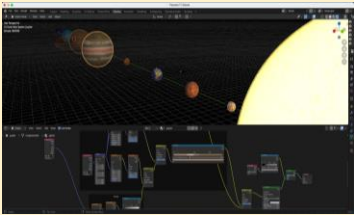
Henry C., Student Work
(Model and Rendering of Electric Fan), 2023



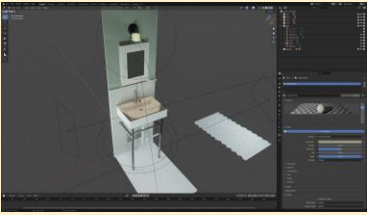
Izzy S., Student Work
(Model of Tavern), 2025



Alex M., Student Work
(Model and UV Mapping of Hammer), 2023



Alex M., Student Work
(Model and Animated Rendering of The Solar System), 2023



Josh S., Student Work
(Small Scene Model), 2025



Jacob T., Student Work
(Model and Rendering of Low-Poly Troll), 2023

Image Making

Information on renderings, drafting, storyboarding, scientific illustration, scene painting, painting, ect. to show skill in a variety of 2D techniques.



Scene Painting for *The Heathers*, 2018
Acrylic paint on plywood
20 x 14 x 10 feet



**Various Color Renderings, Still lives,
& Perspective Drawings, 2023**
Pen, Pencil, Marker
8 x 8 inches



**Set and Costume
Renderings for the Design of Chekhov's *The
Seagull (in Space)***
Tempera
14 x 8 inches



Map & Model Making

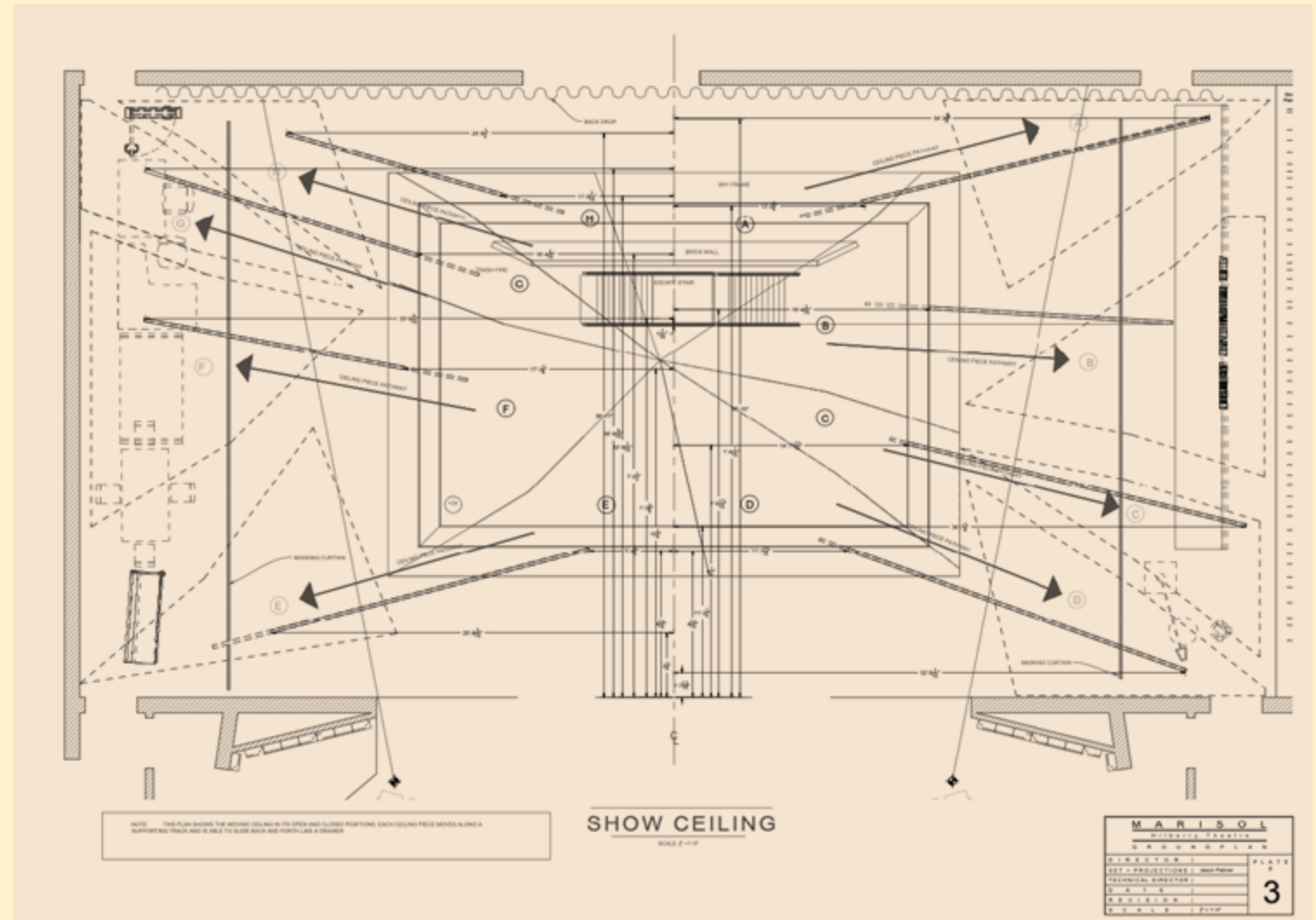
Information on narrative design. Each image shown is a colored model of an original set design for plays assigned during my graduate schooling. Before paint and assembly, each model was technically drafted, digitally modeled, and 3D printed.

Set Design: *Marisol* by José Rivera

This project included a full drafting packet and colored model for each of the six main scenes within the play. The drafted plate on the left shows the plans for an automated and moving set ceiling. This play is also part of a larger research paper (page 16).



Marisol Paper Model (1 of 6), 2021
3D prints, paper, paint, and cardstock
12 x 12 x 12 inches



Drafted Plate of Ceiling Panel System and Movement, 2021
AutoCAD

**Set Design:
*The Violet
Hour*
by Richard
Greenberg**

Featured in the
Wayne State
University
Department of
Theatre and
Dance set design
recruitment fair.



The Violet Hour 1/4" Scale Paper
Model, 2021
3D prints, acrylics, paper, and
cardstock
12 x 12 x 12 inches

Set Design:
Disgraced
**by Ayad
Akhtar**

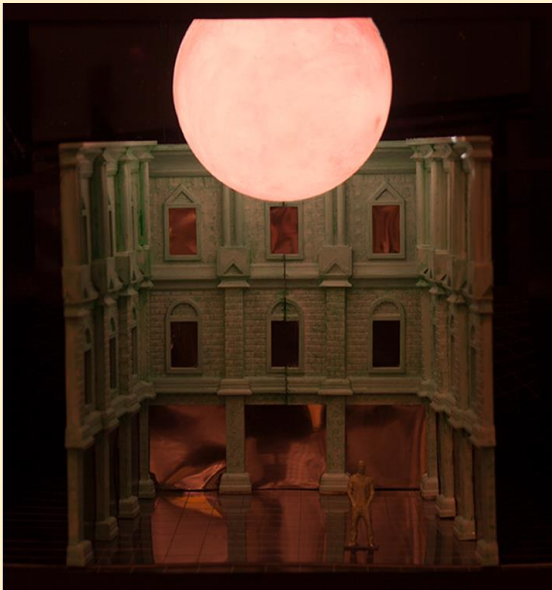


SketchUp Rendering, 2021



Disgraced 1/4" Scale
Paper Model, 2021
3D prints, acrylics,
paper, and cardstock
12 x 12 x 12 inches

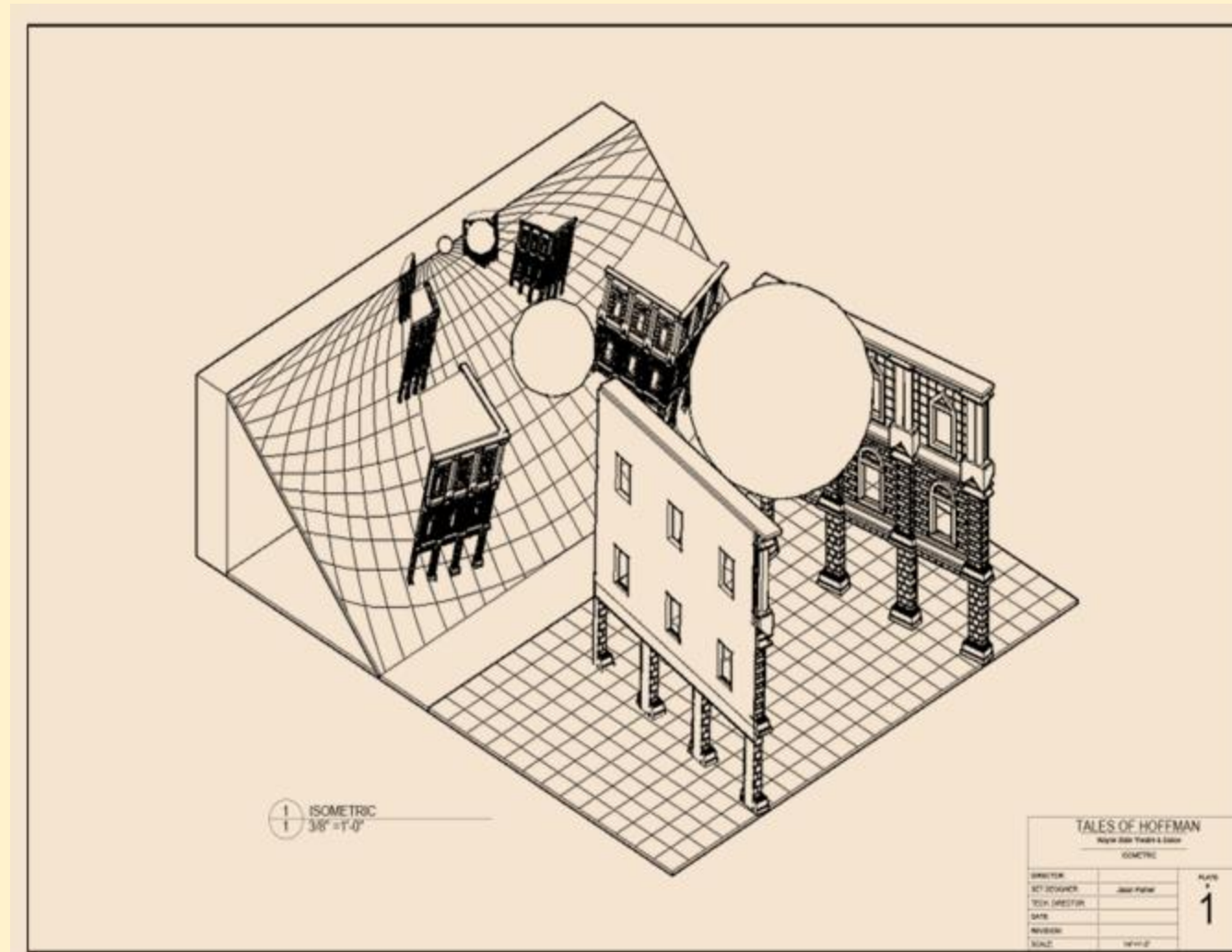
Set Design: *Tales of Hoffmann*



Tales of Hoffmann (Act 3), 1/4" Scale
Paper Model, 2021

3D prints, acrylics, paper, and
cardstock

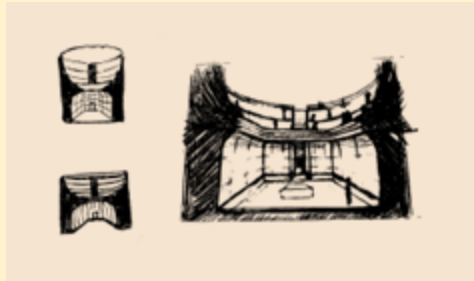
12 x 12 x 12 inches



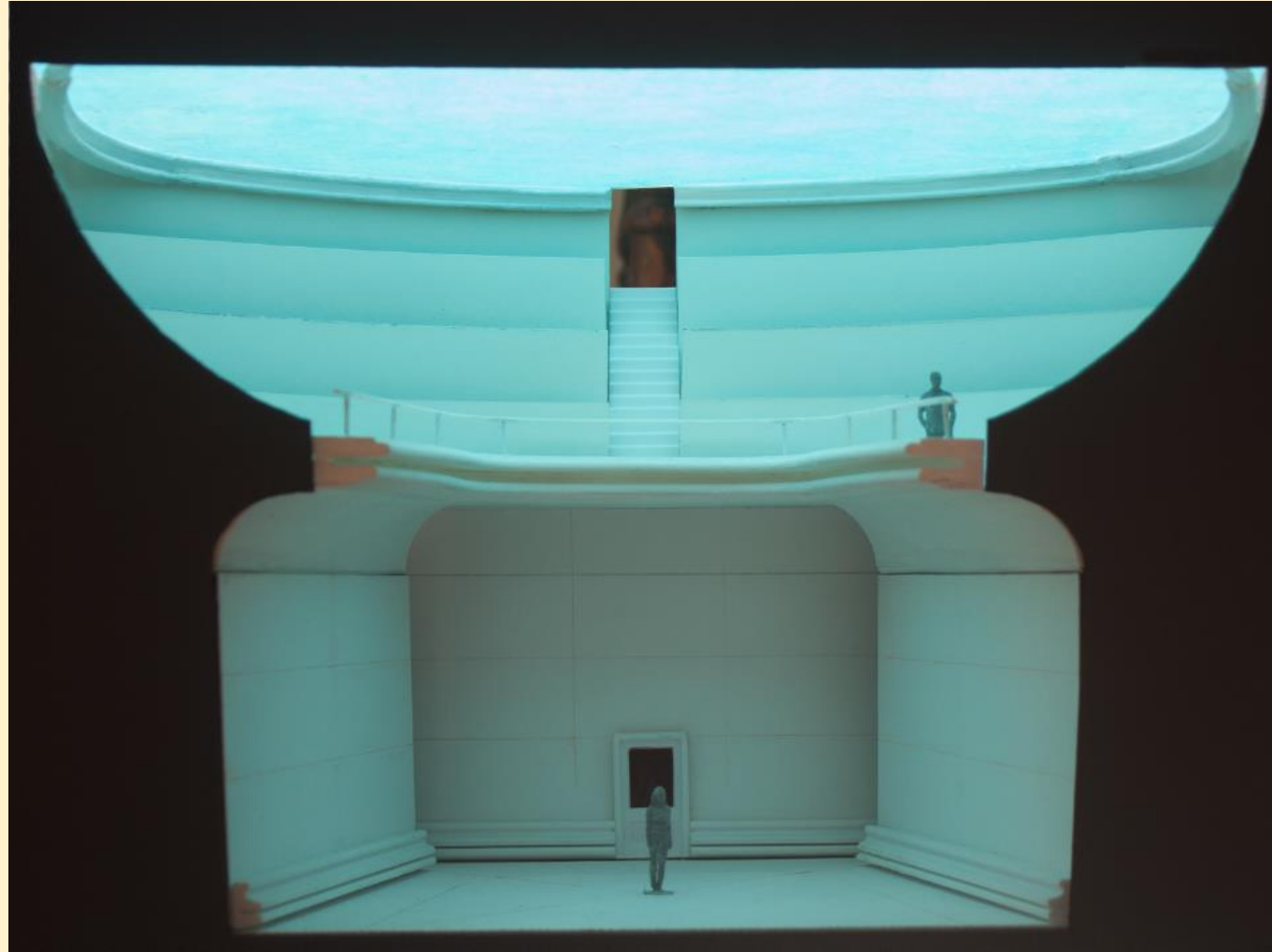
3D Drafted Plate of *Tales of Hoffmann (Act 3)* in Open Position, 2021

AutoCAD

Set Design:
Tales of Hoffmann

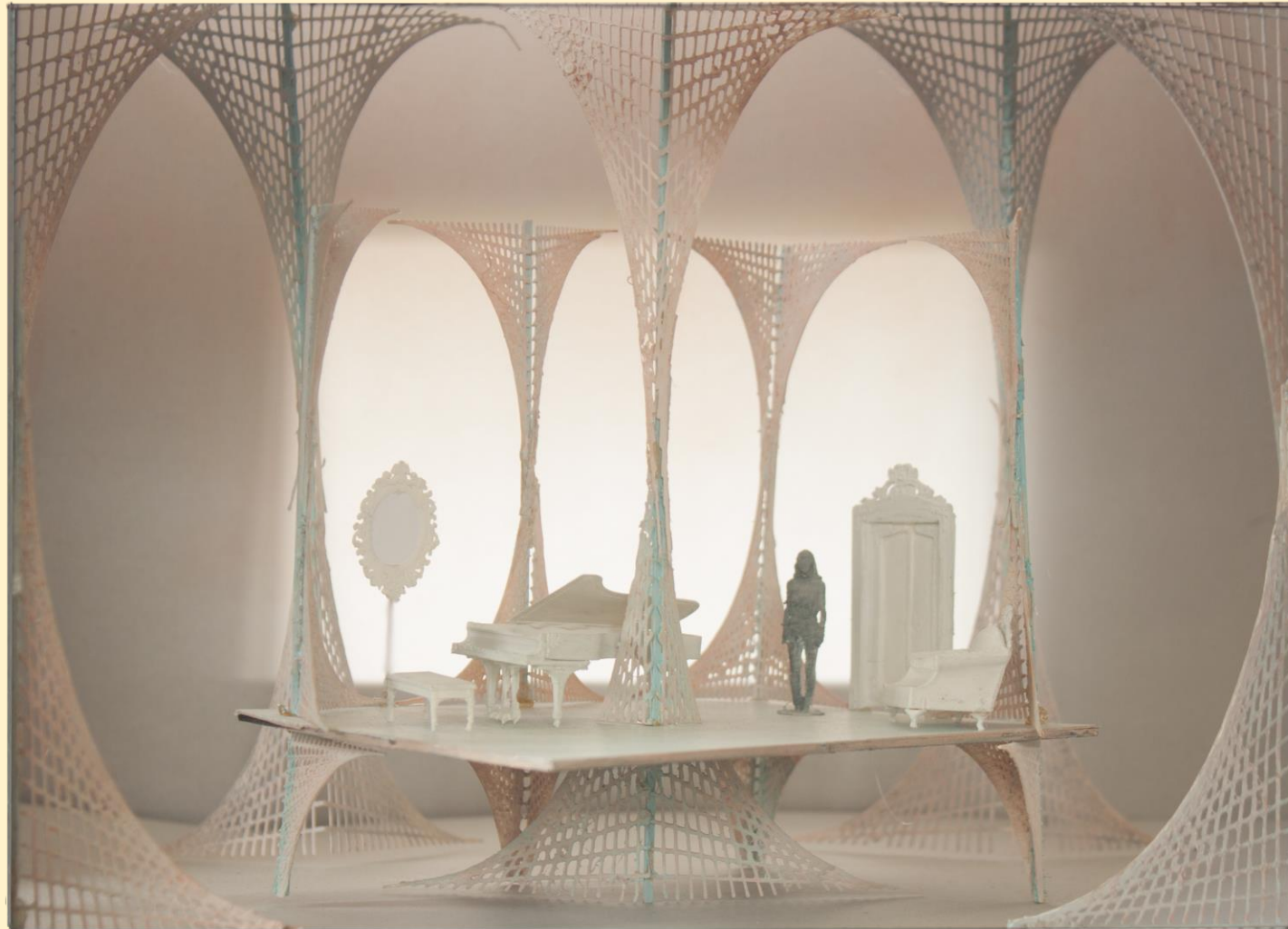


Concept Sketch, 2021



Tales of Hoffmann (Act 1), 1/4" Scale
Paper Model, 2021
3D prints, acrylics, paper, and
cardstock
12 x 12 ix 12 inches

Set Design:
Tales of Hoffmann



Tales of Hoffmann (Act 2), ¼"
Scale Paper Model, 2021
3D prints, acrylics, paper, and
cardstock
12 x 12 x 12 inches

About

Jason has lived in Michigan for his whole life. He grew up outside a small rural town and nearby a forest. He attended university and studied medicine briefly with the intention of becoming a doctor. After graduation he moved to Detroit. For a while, he worked as an EMT. About this time, he began practicing art privately and later applied for an MFA in theatre. After completing his MFA, he began working as a carpenter and teaching art & design at a community college. Now he works as a woodshop technician at a small art school while he teaches. Still, and for the time being, he lives in his home in Detroit, Michigan.



Jason's favorite plant is the Milkweed (Asclepias spp.). He tries to coordinate the color of all his camping equipment to match the flower's color palette.