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MARQUÉS- A NARCO MACBETH:

Scenic Design and Process

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ABSTRACT

MARQUÉS- A NARCO MACBETH: Scenic Design and Process

AUSTIN KOTTKAMP

Theater is developed when several creative disciplines come together in collaboration to make a cohesive piece of art. In this thesis I will explain the process of scenic design using my design of Marqués, a new play, directed by Erik Pearson. I will start by taking the reader through each step of my scenic design process to illustrate what designing entails and how a final design is achieved. This will demonstrate that when obstacles arise (due to visual or practical complications) their resolution is a large part of the collaborative process. By explaining the steps of my scenic design process and highlighting aspects of collaboration I demonstrate how they result in a unified theatrical production.
SECTION ONE

The Scenic Design Process

Marqués: A Narco Macbeth, by Stephan Richter and Monica Andrade is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s Macbeth which follows the life of “Eduardo Marqués”. An architect and resort developer, he descends into despair after getting involved with the largest drug cartel in Mexico. Marqués is a play that confront the parts of Mexico that are almost mythical. There is a hidden Mexico, which is the world of the violent cartels. The playwrights created a fictionalized world surrounding the “Narco Traficantes” that highlighted the issues Mexico presently faces. Using Mexican pop culture and the strained relationship between the United States and Mexico, Marqués, describes a world where the line between good and evil is blurred. Dragging his wife and friends into a world of crime, Marqués seeks out help from “Las Brujas”, three witch sisters who grant Marqués the power and security he desires. As the director and I discovered, the visual world of Marqués benefits from a versatile playing space with walls that can take projection and allow for many entrances and exits to be used simultaneously.

Before Marqués, I had the privilege of interning at The Magic Theatre in San Francisco, during the Summer of 2015. I was a general production intern and my job was to aid all aspects of production. The Magic Theatre is a “new-works” theatre that focuses on producing new plays. New plays present unique challenges that do not occur when producing an established play. Many new plays are still being worked on as the production team begins and as the script evolves the team must be agile and
accommodating to the changing vision of the playwright. During Marqués I received thirteen rewrites of the script and after reading each one I needed to carefully assess my design to be sure that I presented the most accurate depiction of the visual world. I felt that this internship was serendipitous when I learned that I would be working on Marqués because it gave me insight into the process of producing new-works. During my internship I observed and adopted the flexibility that company members displayed while approaching living and morphing texts. This experience helped me be open to new ideas and keep a fluid working process during my design for Marqués.

My scenic design process starts with multiple readings of the script, then moves into research, sketching and rendering, model making to scale, drafting, budgeting, construction, painting, and rehearsal. Due to the collaborative and living nature of theater, the design is always changing to fit new inspirations that come from continued work or the rehearsal room. I worked with Director Erik Pearson, my assistant Amy Kistler, Lighting Designer Will Poulin, Media Designers Monica Andrade, Steve Gerlach, and Erik Pearson, Costume Designer Elysia Ellis, Properties Designer Gwen Vahey, and various shop staff to ensure that this design would meet all production needs and stay within the budget.

As stated above my process starts by reading the script multiple times. The first is a simple read to get the plot and characters in mind. The second read is focused on producing a scenic breakdown which notes every aspect of scenery mentioned in the script. The scenic breakdown includes locales, furniture, properties, set pieces, scene changes, and other needs. Once I produce this document I move into
research. Before the first meeting with the director, I begin initial research and start developing an early concept.

Research consists of images that represent locales noted in the script, first impressions of the tones in the play, and suggestions of color palettes for the scenery. Locales refer to settings and locations referenced in the script. I prepared this research to visually explain where my mind was going with the design. “You can’t talk a design” is a quote from UCSC Professor, Kate Edmunds, and that sentence highlights the importance of having visual representation to accurately communicate ideas with research. An example of using research images to convey ideas is seen in image 1, to the right. I showed this image to the director explaining how the single light in the heavy blue of this image expressed an air of oppression to me. This feeling coupled with the urban imagery seemed to be a perfect start for developing the visual world of criminals.

My first meeting with Pearson was over the phone. He was still in New York during our preproduction process, which is the period of time before rehearsals and builds begin. Holding meetings over the phone was a challenge I had not encountered. I quickly learned how to communicate my ideas clearly and concisely.
over the phone, while working with a new director I had not met before. This was an interesting experience and I found in the past that I often took for granted being able to work with onsite colleagues. Pearson and I developed a working vocabulary for this production so that we could verbally understand the spatial conversations we were having about different aspects of the design. A shared vocabulary helps artists stay on the same track when making progress on the design. In our first meeting Pearson specified wanting a collage of architectural textures, entrances for quick movement around the set, a versatile world to help tell the stories and represent several locales, textured projection surfaces; not projection screens, and a unified visual aesthetic that could be understood with or without projections.

The research process is an essential step of design because it creates a vocabulary between the director and designer. Images found during the research process are an easy and quick way to support ideas with visual representation, avoiding any misunderstanding. Starting to imagine the world of Marqués and Mexico I needed to research how the modern country was conceived, leading me to look through historic photography of the formation of modern day Mexico. In the UCSC McHenry Library, I found a booked titled *Mexico: A Photographic History* by Rosa Casanova and Adriana Konzevik, that had photography from 1911 to the 1980s. It is clear looking at Mexico
City’s architecture that Spanish influences dominate in the capital. The photograph of the national palace of Mexico, as seen in image 2, shows the influence of Spanish architecture. In image 3, a photograph of the royal palace of Madrid in Spain, photographed by the blog “The Travelettes” in 2014, we see a clear comparison showing that Mexico City was built while under the influence of Spanish imperialism. This interest in Mexico City came from the director saying that the aesthetic of the scenic design needed to support references to multiple locales. My initial research concentrated solely on the resort town in Baja Mexico, Cabo San Lucas, a locale in the script.

When one thinks of Cabo San Lucas one imagines the bright sun, white sand, and white buildings of the resort havens but that specificity was too constricting for this script. Cabo San Lucas is a resort tourist destination and because of this many of the images that come up in research are overwhelmingly positive despite socioeconomic disparities that are abundant in the region. In image 4, above, an idyllic sense of relaxation, and wealth are displayed as the facade of Cabo. “The Jewel of Baja” is a hard place to live
for locals who depend financially on the tourism drawn there every year. In 2015 “Hurricane Odile” came to the Baja Peninsula ravaging the seaside and putting a halt to commerce in Cabo San Lucas. The damage was devastating and plunged the region deeper into poverty (Image 5). While unfortunate, this became a strong research point for developing the world of *Marqués* because the economic disparity was a large theme in the play. The drug cartels believe that money is power. I knew that understanding Mexican culture would help me better understand the script and the world we were building so I started researching several photographers that greatly influenced the foundation of the design.

I explored pop culture because it is a good gauge of the development and structure of a culture. With this starting point I was able to relate popular items and trends to *Marqués* and get a better understanding of the play. There are several mentions of things specific to Mexico, such as “Ultrafemme” which is a cosmetics store similar to Sephora. When looking for historic pop culture I found the works of Nacho Lopez, a Mexican photographer working from the 1950s to 1980s. Lopez captured iconic images in Mexico such as “La Venus se Fue de Juerga por los Barrios
Bajos” (Image 6) which translates to “Venus went partying in the poor quarters.” This image immediately caught my attention as it was a part of series, in the 1950s, where this mannequin was paraded around Mexican barrios to capture the reaction to a nude figure with blonde hair. This photo helped me realize the growth of sexuality in Mexico as Marqués uses human sexuality to further the plot line of the play.

In opposition to pop culture, I examined Enrique Metinides’ photography of trauma to capture the other side of life. Metinides is a Mexican photographer who worked as a crime reporter from 1948 to 1997 when he was forced to retire. Despair, conflict, pain, and trauma are all revealed in Metinides’ photos which capture moments after a great tragedy has occurred. Whether it is a plane crash, or human on human violence, every one of his photos show the aftermath of trauma and the shock and curiosity that follows. Gabriel Kuri asks Metinides in an interview, “Where does your style come from.” Metinides responds “There’s a scene in a key film of a building being burned down for a vendetta, in which the flames are seen only reflected on the faces of the witnesses” (Kuri 11). Metinides’ photos fascinated me because in Marqués the way to stay safe is to be a spectator of the violence between...
the cartels. The scenery needed to provide space across the stage where actors could, from a distance, watch the action of the play—creating a visual story of characters involved in violence and those too weak to stop it. In image 7, a plane is seen crashed into the ground (most likely causing a fatality), but what is interesting to me is the masses of bystanders watching the first response and assessment of this accident. The presence of an audience as spectators of violence and trauma was a theme that I wanted to include in my scenic design, and it would later manifest in the configuration of the audience banks.

Continuing to research before my first meeting with the director, I found images to convey themes, tones, and color palettes. I started by looking at the landscapes of Cabo San Lucas, searching for colors that fell on the yellow and orange spectrum. Image 8 shows the sun bleached buildings and afternoon sunlight that would later become influential in the paint treatment on the scenic walls. In that vein, I was on the lookout for similar images.
that would continue to illustrate the socioeconomic disparity in Mexico while staying within a similar aesthetic. Images 9 and 10 show the striking comparison that reveals the truth behind the difference between the outsiders and the inhabitants of Cabo San Lucas. This region is a playground for visitors who enjoy Cabo while turning a blind eye to the crime and instability that locals endure. This injustice coupled with the devastating hurricane mentioned earlier were aspects that raised the tension for me in the play between Marqués and those characters around him. All characters were trapped, either by crime or by society.

After my first meeting with the director, I had a clearer sense of what our collective production design aesthetic would be. Pearson told me he envisioned this being an immersive world that referred to a pseudo presentational style similar to a cabaret, where the audience is on a lower level from the actors and the stage was raised to the audience’s eye-level. Pearson encouraged me to look at Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812 performed in 2012 at Ars Nova, directed by Rachel
Chavkin, and written and composed by Dave Mallow (image 11). I quickly noticed
the way the stage snaked around and engaged the audience. This performance
configuration creates a kinetic
viewing experience for audience
members who are encouraged to
follow the play’s action by
turning in their seats. The cabaret
style of presentation inspired our
seating configuration. In addition, Pearson wanted a physical presence of oppression
over the set and showed images from Tabac Rouge as examples of the pipe structure
we used. He was inspired by French artist James Thiérée and his production of Tabac Rouge (2015 Next Wave Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music). A large mechanized
piece of scenery hung over the performer’s heads and sculpted the scenery all the
while looming above, seen in
image 12. The pipe scaffolding
also clashed, in a good way, with
the existing aesthetic of the
Experimental Theater.

The Experimental Theater is a black box theater that uses “Steeldeck”
platforms to configure different seating banks which vary show to show. “Steeldeck”
is a brand of platform that has a stable steel body and can be stacked and joined to
configure larger platforms. I wanted to use these platforms because of their steel
body. I kept the body of these platforms visible in my design to add to the architectural collage concept we were working with. Known as “the X-Space” this theater is 60’0” by 60’0” and 21’0” tall. The X-Space becomes a difficult theater to design in because of the many configurations the seating can be changed to, as well as the sight lines which become difficult to work within. Because Pearson wanted to subvert the existing architecture of the X-Space we needed to find a way to oppose the angular structure. When designing in this type of theater it is easy to want to make a proscenium or a thrust arrangement for the seating. These conventional theater arrangements were not going to work for Marqués.

Previously, I was the scenic designer of a production of Tracy Letts’ Bug, Fall Quarter 2015, and it was produced in the same theater space. I placed that design in a corner of the theater, placing seating banks on either side and at angles to the playing area. I decided to do this to help shape the playing space with large audience banks. This effect made the fourth wall large as actors were viewed at a wide angle. It opened the playing space and the two separate audience banks became a part of the scenery. The playing space, seen in the photo 13, was a solution that broke away from conventional X-Space configurations. Opening the playing space allowed actors a freer range of movement that supported the eerie and unsettling nature of the play.
This relates to Marquès’ layout because I wanted a new configuration to make
the show’s presentation dynamic. Deciding to raise the stage from the audience was
not enough, we also skewed the set 12
degrees off of the square of the X-Space.
This slight deviation in geometry was
interesting in the design but did not translate to the audience’s perspective.
The skewed geometry did, however,
create an uneasy, off-kilter world.
Unaware of this design choice, the audience was affected without being able
to trace their unease to its source. To further our deviation from the existing
architecture I placed a scaffolding of pipe at odd angles to clash against the
mezzanine and tension wire grid in the X-Space (Image 14) a visual conflict that both
the director and myself were looking for in this design. While continuing my research
with the new leads given to me by the director, I moved into sketches and renderings
of what the layout and scenery would look like.
The layout of the design went through several permutations as we did not want to use a conventional theater seating arrangement such as proscenium (audience separated from the playing space by a proscenium), three quarter thrust (audience on three sides of the playing space), or the round (audience surrounding the playing space. I used the CAD tool “SketchUp” to start conceptualizing the layout of the audience banks. The seating bank plans, seen in image 15, are four of over twenty different configurations that Pearson was interested in pursuing.

As I started to sculpt the three dimensional space of the stage I moved into my sketching and rendering phase of the process, where I began to transform research into scenic elements. Sketches are simple line drawings that 1) convey the large ideas and 2) get input from the director about which direction we should be going. I started with the sketch in image 16 which was a free hand collage of textures that I was interested in using. The idea here was to create large walls with different physical textures on them that included brick, cinder block, wire fencing, steel frames, exposed drain pipes, wood pillars, and plaster. These would then be painted so that their
various colors would be muted and projections could be thrown onto of all these surfaces. A problem arose with this concept when I learned that the projections would need a more unified surface that could only deviate by an inch in depth which would not be possible with all of the textures I proposed. This was an exciting new challenge because I was finding the same kind of dynamism that was in my sketches while creating a new idea for my walls. Sketches are often redone several times to reflect changes in the production. These changes may stem from an artistic choice or by practical necessity. It is important to note that during this I am still in constant communication with the director, communicating via e-mail. I am sending sketches, research and asking about the visual aesthetic we are crafting.

Working on the sketches for my concept development I began to shift from 2D sketches to 3D models. I began working on the to-scale white model of the scenery to start communicating to the director and the scene shop the ideas I want to implement in the design. A white model is a diorama that shows shapes and objects in the theater space for the designer to communicate early
scenic ideas accurately. The difference between white model and finished model is that in the white model designers mostly work with shapes and spatial relationships of scenic elements as opposed to adding paint and texture details. Early concepts of the ground plan (Image 17) had walls completely surrounding the audience banks, which are grey, and the playing space is represented with white. Continuing with iconic aspects of Cabo San Lucas I went to research the Cabo Arch as seen in image 18. This beautiful rock formation is a strong and striking image that is specific to the play’s locale. In early designs I wanted to incorporate this iconic formation to add a layer of familiarity with Cabo San Lucas to the scenic design. As seen in image 19, which is an early white model of the scenic design, this element was a cumbersome entrance portal for audience members to an early seating configuration. While I thought it was a strong image, the scenic design took a more minimalized route to the final outcome.

The first designs included platforms at different heights, walls overlapping to include entrances for the actors, and a bridge that cut through audience banks. These preliminary designs now look clunky compared to the outcome but they were entirely inspired by the concepts I had been working with from the start. I picked out the exciting aspects of this layout and reformatted the next iteration. Pearson helped by
explaining that we needed to have action on all sides of the theater, and this led to a connection of runways where actors could start and end scenes on opposite sides of the stage—keeping audience members engaged in the action of the play. After we decided to put the audience in the midst of the action of the play and had this general layout I was able to begin drafting the stage and scenery.

Drafting is a precise craft that lays out scaled drawings of all scenic elements. It is used to communicate with the various shops and designers. I used mostly hand drafting for Marqués and produced a ground plan, front elevations, and sections. The ground plan is a top-down look onto the scenery noting placement on the stage. Front elevations show detail and height of scenic elements looking straight on (Image 20). Sections cut through the scenery and turn it to the side to show dimensions of items on or in the walls. These are supplemented with side elevations. Technical drafting and the model box are worked on simultaneously to build unified and clear communication between the designer and shops. I worked with Technical Operations
Manager Joe Weiss to configure
the layout of the space and make
sure that we would be able to
have enough seating in the
theater. Our target was 80 seats
and we found a way to get 120
seats in the space. Joe also helped
me by keeping the budget in my
mind while I was designing.

While working he would tell me what we could make out of stock scenery which are
items that we already own and by using them we cut costs. Joe pointed out in a
meeting that the platforms for the raised stage would be able to be made out of stock
steel deck and that the walls would be able to be made out of stock steel frames
keeping the initial design within budget. The director and I wanted to install a
trapdoor in the center raised platform. This trapdoor needed to have a concealed
access point that an actor could crawl along under the set. Joe suggested we use
duvetyn (a black masking fabric that is inexpensive and fire-retardant), and attach it
along the upstage runway so actors could enter the trap unseen by audience members
(Image 21). The drafting and the model box are the main tools in communicating a
design and as I finished those the scene shop began construction and assembly. The
platforms were placed in the theater to aid evening rehearsals and the walls went up
soon after.
In rehearsal the platforms were useful helping with blocking and informing the rest of the design. A problem arose when rehearsal boots were brought into the space and actors began rehearsing with them. The shift from rubber soled shoes to boots made each footstep a cacophonous thud and with twenty actors walking those sounds over-powered the space, due to the echo chamber beneath the stage created by raised platforms. Joe found an easy solution that was cheaper than adding rubber soles to the boots, which was to carpet the playing space and the escapes. Once that was installed the sound was no longer an issue and since the platforms were raised the carpet was hardly noticeable from the audience.

The build was moving along quickly and the paint treatment was the next big step to tackle. After meeting with the director to get his impression of how he saw these walls looking I continued with the theme of collaged architectural textures. There were three walls to cover and I started by making renderings of each wall.
Images 22 and 23 are the finalized renderings I made in Photoshop to propose a photorealistic paint treatment. Each wall needed to have its own character and be light in color to work with projections. I used urban photography and Judy A. Juracek’s book *Surfaces* to compile different elevations of these walls working in tandem with the director, lighting design, and media designer. I needed to prepare paint samples for the director to approve before painting the set. These show the paint colors that I would want to use and the plaster texture for the walls. As previously mentioned we needed to be sure that the projections would work with the texture and tested that on the samples. Image 24 shows the sample board of the textures I wanted to use. There were four in total, including a semicircle swirl, stucco, smooth, and a smooth-over with striation.

The next step after the samples was to construct the scenic walls and begin a skim coat of plaster to add layers of texture before any paint. A skim coat is a light application of a material, in this case plaster. The plaster on the walls
changed the texture of the smooth wood into different materials such as concrete and steel. Rajesh Westerberg, the department’s Technical Director, had suggested that for the brick and cinder block we use a material he learned about while at a USITT (United States Institute for Theatre Technology) conference called Pulp Art. This product is made from recycled material and is pressed into sheets of texture that can take paint. I wanted to use this material because it supported the design concept of an architectural collage. Brick and cinder block textures made up large portions of the wall and having the material already formed saved a good deal of time. Painting the walls with a base color and adding color variations started the process in an attempt to recreate the photorealistic imagery I proposed with my first design. The walls in image 25 show the color variations over the skim coat plaster and the Pulp Art brick and cinderblock.

This process was not achieving the desired effect and was not working properly with the projections. Because of this Professor Kate Edmunds, Erik Pearson and myself met to find another solution to the walls that would allow for projections and have an energetic and unified look. A white paint treatment to cover all of these existing color variations and textures was proposed. This treatment used a roller to apply a coat of thinned white paint that allowed some of the base colors to come through. This treatment made the walls look aged and distressed but there was also a need for more texture to be applied to the wall. I found and used dilapidated sheets of three quarter inch plywood welding deck and corrugated plastic sheeting to cover different portions of the wall. They added new color variations, as well as more
interesting shapes to the existing collaged architecture of the wall. I then applied a spatter treatment consisting of warm and cool tones which added more dimension to the walls. During the paint process I needed to put tarps over large areas of the set and the seating banks to protect the carpet and seats. This also included the runways going to center stage (so that I would not track paint with my shoes) and since this was a messy and energetic paint process we needed to be cautious of drips that would fly out. I also would paint quickly and stop, to walk away from the wall and take a look at the large scheme of what I was painting and where touch ups were going to be needed. It is critical to keep an eye on the entire paint surface and step back every once and a while because it is very easy to stay close and become too detail-oriented, which could lead to over painting. The changes produced a unified treatment that had a living history, adding a distressed realism to the walls (Image 26).
Scenic Designers are responsible for any furniture that the production may need and Marqués needed a rolling drink cart and a DJ stand. Pearson and I decided that the drink cart needed to reflect the high end design of Eduardo Marqués. The character is an architect and a resort developer so his home needed to reflect that. Starting with a simple minimalistic approach I designed a drink cart that would be made out of box tube steel and be finished with a glossy black drink tray and a rectilinear body (Image 27). The DJ booth was a rolling cart that needed to roll forward and act as a DJ station as if it was equipped with turntables. The height of the stage and six inch reveals on the cart hid the top so that an actor could pantomime spinning a record. For the front of the DJ booth I designed a decal of a Mexican sugar skull in Photoshop that fit with the media design (Image 28). I worked with Jack Rusk, the student Technical Director, during our technical rehearsals to construct and paint the drink cart and DJ booth.

Technical rehearsals are time set aside in the production schedule to integrate technical elements into a production and at UCSC they begin a week before opening.
night. These rehearsals act as a time to fine tune and polish the production before opening. Actors told us about several unsafe points on the set: a piece of jagged box tube, a few screws that were left poking out of the walls, and they requested padding on the escape for the trap. Making the performance space safe is a high priority and responsibility for the scenic team.

Technical rehearsal is normally the first time a play is viewed under theatrical lighting and, in the case of Marqués, the media being projected on the scenic walls. Theatrical lighting is different from conventional lighting which can undesirably alter the paint treatment. Media was a major focal point for this production, causing the lighting design to focus more on the show deck and runways as opposed to the walls. Seeing this, I noticed that the paint treatment on the walls did not have to be greatly altered. When media was projected the image was clear, only leaving an impression of the texture of the walls (Image 29).

Our technical rehearsals ran smoothly. I was able to finish scenic touch ups and safety notes within the time allotted. We ran the entire show once by the end of the process putting us in a strong place for dress rehearsals and opening. Through the
joint efforts of myself, my assistant Amy, and the scene shop, the scenic design was completed on time and the show opened on February 26, 2016.
SECTION TWO

Reflections

After Marqués had closed, I assessed to what degree my scenic design and design process was successful. Despite a challenging beginning and setbacks during the build process, I think the design was very successful. I had created a world that was adaptable, easily understood by the audience and dynamic. The creative team was able to produce a collaborative piece of art that had a unified aesthetic and resulted in a world which was easily understood. The set aided all aspects of design by providing a foundation. This foundation allowed media to project on unconventional surfaces, lighting to isolate parts of the theater, and even provided a unique speaker configuration to accompany the new seating layout. Though there were problems that arose while working on this show, they did not effect any major part of this play’s outcome.

Completing the design for Marqués felt very rewarding. This show presented many personal challenges: I was working with someone I had not met before, the script was constantly being developed, communication was difficult, and my design needed to be compatible with media. These challenges however turned into an amazing learning experience. Being open and willing to engage with new artists helped me stay positive and on task during the process, keeping my work productive and visually strong. There were times where communication became problematic and things that should have been completed or decided upon were pushed back in the
schedule. This was solved by developing a strict practice of communication and a change in my response time to emails and phone calls. I developed a more disciplined work ethic during this process as well, making the most of each hour that I could be in the space working. During Winter quarter I was also a Teaching Assistant for a class in the art department. This was a challenging class to balance on my work load because I was required to lead morning sections and much of the work in theater takes place at night. The work ethic I learned during this process helped me constantly work towards my goals and responsibilities.

I am most proud of my scenic painting on this production because of the new techniques I learned and the adaptability I displayed when designing. I had never worked with plaster before and designing a skim-coat for the wall treatment was a satisfying accomplishment. I really enjoyed the outcome of the photorealistic wall treatment. The walls looked as if they had the decay of several decades eating away their facades and revealing their true appearance. I also did not have any wet paint on opening day which was something I had had trouble with in the past. This design process did make clear that I need to be more daring with making choices. Early on in the process I struggled with communicating my ideas with Pearson because I was not making decisions but rather offering options for the director to pick; however, this was not a productive method to be working with. This also caused me to make choices without providing exact rendering which caused confusion later in the production process. Making exact renderings and models to directly translate the design is something I will continue to work on in my future as a scenic designer.
The only part of the design I would change would be to remove the twelve degree turn of the scenic structure and have my set square to the theater. After watching the show several times I noticed that the shift was not explicitly noticeable and later I learned that the slight turn had caused complications for lighting and media who were hanging off of a square grid. Had I known ahead of time that this configuration was going to make their jobs more challenging I would have omitted that part of the design. While watching the show I noticed that I could hear actors moving throughout the space behind the walls which was distracting for me but I believe I only noticed because I had watched several runs of the show.

*Marqués* was successful, receiving great responses, large audiences, and my design was noticed as a strong component of the production. UC Santa Cruz Professor Emeritus Michael Warren came to see *Marqués* and asked “Who designed this set, it couldn’t have been a student.” This was a flattering compliment to receive.

I am very pleased with the outcome of this production. We were given complex challenges and worked together to find the best solutions. *Marqués* was a big learning curve for me but I feel that I prevailed and produced the best possible set. I am grateful for the guidance I was given and the collaboration that was possible with enthusiastic artists who all wanted to tell a new and epic story.
APPENDIX A: Additional Research Images

Color Palette Research
Alejandro Cartagena, Urban Holes. 2009.
APPENDIX B: Additional Process Images

Photographed by author.
APPENDIX C: Additional Production Images

Photos taken and provided by Elysia Ellis

David Ibarra’s Estate

The Marqués Estate
Various Locales
BIBLIOGRAPHY


