

"Time flies when you're having a good time, and it's hard not to when the action is as spirited, the sets as glorious, the characters as inventive, and the performances as much fun as they are here. They should concede the make-up and special effects awards to the sequel right now, and throw in another for art direction."

Jack Mathews, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION





"Production values are aces with dynamic, gritty sets; lighting that makes the movie take place in a perpetual twilight; and a lively, nerve-jangling score." Kirk Honeycutt, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

BEST ART DIRECTION

PRODUCTION DESIGNER:

**NATHAN CROWLEY** 

JULIE OCHIPINTI

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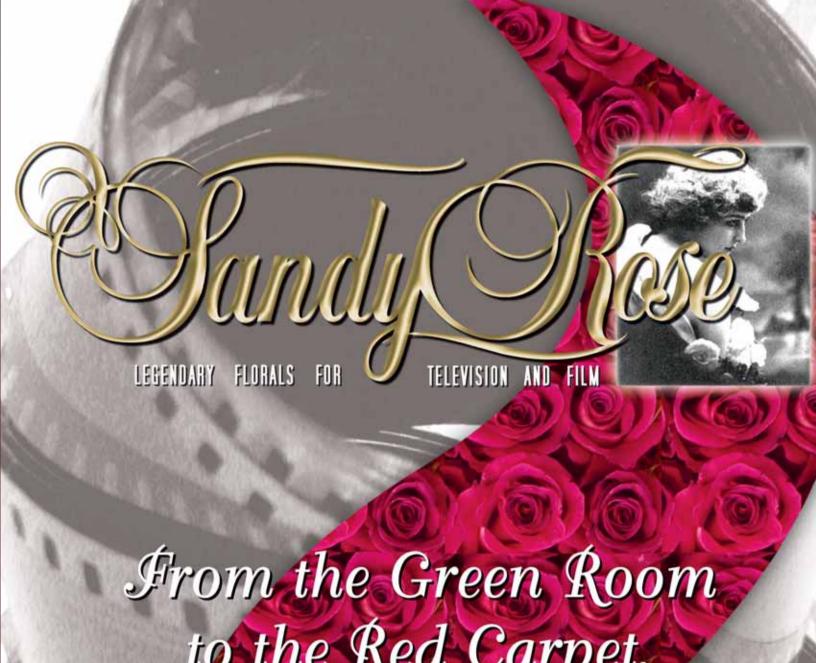
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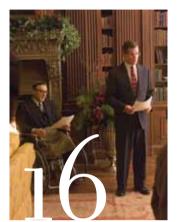
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### contents

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Set Decorators Society of America

Winter 2006











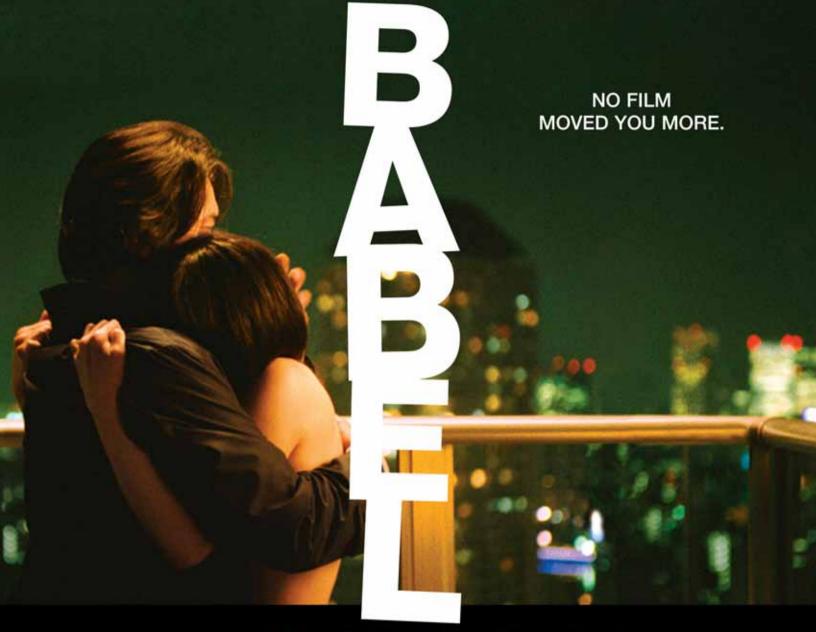


## 26 **BOBBY** Lisa Fisher SDSA In its final performance the Ambassador Hotel has a starring role in an American tragedy

- 32 **FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS** Richard Goddard SDSA Dick Goddard and company reminisce about working with Henry "Bummy" Bumstead and "doing it old school"
- 38 **THE GOOD GERMAN** Kristen Toscano Messina SDSA 1940s style on sets and behind-the-scenes
- 48 **THE DEPARTED** Leslie E Rollins SDSA Character driven choices define script and sets
- 56 **DÉJÀ VU** Rosemary Brandenburg SDSA A story of danger, fear, loss and courage...and then there's the movie.
- 60 **CHILDREN OF MEN** Jennifer Williams SDSA Decorating a cautionary tale whose future could be all too real



Cover: THE GOOD SHEPHERD
Set Decorator Gretchen Rau
Supported by:
Elaine O'Donnell SDSA
Leslie E Rollins SDSA
Alyssa Winter
Production Designer Jeannine Oppewall
Universal Studios
Photo by Andrew Schwartz
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## **BEST PICTURE**

ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ IÑÁRRITU JON KILIK STEVE GOLIN

### BEST ART DIRECTION

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
BRIGITTE
BROCH

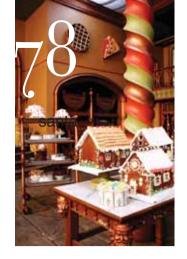
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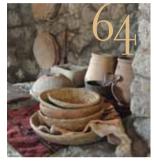


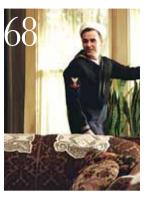
### contents











72

### Film decor

- 64 **THE NATIVITY STORY** Alessandra Querzola SDSA A faithful reproduction of Biblical times
- **FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION** Dena Roth SDSA Sets for a film of filming a film
- 72 **STRANGER THAN FICTION** Ford Wheeler *Stylized surrounds for unique personalities*
- 78 **THE SANTA CLAUSE 3: The Escape Clause** Don Diers SDSA *North Pole Nouveau*
- THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS Lauri Gaffin SDSA The pursuit of an era when Pong was still cool

### In every issue

- 89 SDSA Events Red Carpet Gala Day with Set Decorators
- 90 MarketPlace
- 94 Resources



BEST PICTURE Producers Bill Kong · Zhang Weiping BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY Zhao Xiaoding BEST COSTUME DESIGN Yee Chung Man BEST ART DIRECTION Huo Tingxiao BEST MAKEUP Man Yun Ling · Liu Jianping

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
A film by ZHANG YIMOU

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### contributors

**Tom Castañeda** is an award-winning broadcast journalist, having spent eight years working in television news throughout the United States. Currently he is Merchandizing Manager for a leading design-oriented magazine and works closely with the SDSA. Over the last four years, Castaneda has written frequently for SET DECOR. He is a design and entertainment enthusiast who loves both film and television.

Sarah Cordi came to Los Angeles from Baltimore where she was the Senior Editor at GIRL'S LIFE magazine. She edited several books published in conjunction with Scholastic Inc. Writing articles that included entertainment reviews, celebrity profiles and advice-driven features for GL, she also helped produce and style the magazine's fashion pages. It was doing the bedroom makeover stories that confirmed her intuitions and brought her to Los Angeles, where she has become involved in the world of set decoration and is now a contributor to SET DECOR.

**Lisa Dare** is a freelance photographer, but her original training was as an academic, with a specialty in film history. The Phi Beta Kappa scholar did research in a number of arenas from the Venice Film Festival to the Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco. Her studies of classic films have helped shape her photographic eye. An SDSA business member since 1998, she has photographed innumerable film and television sets and is a frequent contributor to SET DECOR.

Ken Haber's background in art and photography played an important role in his 25-year career as a location manager with such directors as Adrian Lyne, Oliver Stone and Ridley Scott. Currently he works as a photographer, shooting television and film sets for magazines and portfolios. His photo essays have appeared as set dressing in various film and television projects. In addition to his photography, he serves as manager of the LA branch of the Maryland Film Office. Married to Set Decorator Rosemary Brandenburg SDSA, Haber is an SDSA business member and frequent contributor to SET DECOR.

**Kenneth Hunter** has worked in the film industry in a variety of capacities since 1971. For the last sixteen years he has worked in the location department, notably as a scout on films such as CATCH ME IF YOU CAN, COLLATERAL, ZATHURA and many others. His photography appeared in SET DECOR last year. The article on THE GOOD SHEPHERD is his first for the magazine.

**Sue Steinberg's** 20-year career as a television development-and-production executive and producer (including as a member of the original development team and the first Executive Producer of MTV) affords a unique POV into the world of set decoration. As head of corporate communications of a multi-national architectural glass company, she created a line of decorative glass for commercial installation, and led the company to invest as a sponsor of programs and shows at the Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Art & Design, New York. She is passionate about mid-20th century American art, movies and television.

Editor's note: SET DECOR welcomes frequent contributor Kate Sheeley SDSA as a new Associate Editor. Her writing, behind-the-scenes support and feedback have been invaluable. She joins Joanne Baker SDSA and Susan Ory Powers SDSA in a power block of intelligent, ethical, witty, articulate Associate Editors, a cornerstone of the magazine.



Winter 2006

Issue 14

**Executive Editors** 

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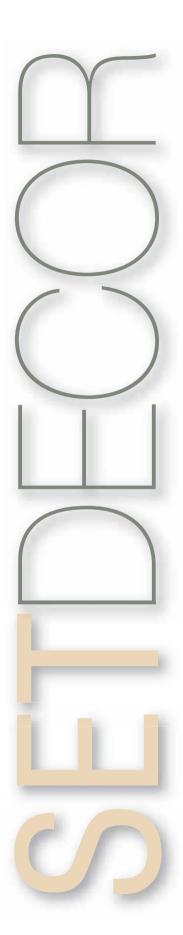
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### from the editors



Awards season provides direction for this issue focused on notable new feature film releases. We only wish we had more space to cover even more of the recent excellent film and television work.

The films we celebrate here offered a wide range of styles and experiences for the set decorators involved. From comedies to period dramas, political and crime thrillers to military retrospective, the breadth of skill in our profession is remarkable.

Upcoming SDSA Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, the self-effacing Dick Goddard, treated us to a rare interview on the condition that we focus on work of the late Production Designer Henry Bumstead. Collaborators on thirteen films, their last one, World War II drama FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS, is generating much awards buzz.

The choice to put a set from Robert de Niro's CIA exploration THE GOOD SHEPHERD on the cover honors the final film decorated by Set Decorator Gretchen Rau. Last year's Oscar® winner for achievement in Art Direction for MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA, she passed away in March of this year.

Much of the coverage in this issue explores challenges faced by set decorators working on films with serious intent. The aforementioned; THE DEPARTED, a crime and police story; BOBBY, exploring events on Robert Kennedy's last day; the science fiction tale CHILDREN OF MEN and the domestic terrorism/time travel drama of DÉJÀ VU.

THE NATIVITY STORY provides a glimpse into the European paradigm for set decorators on this Bible story shot in Italy and Morocco with a mostly Italian art department.

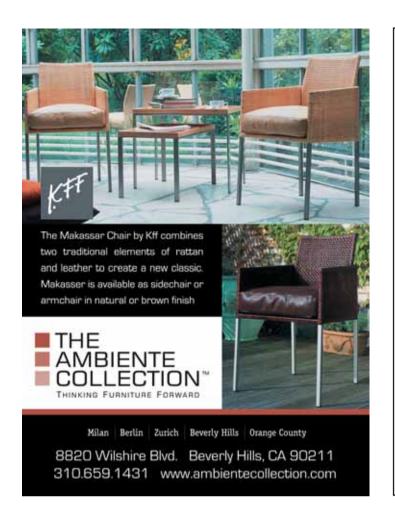
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS offers an uplifting biopic, a contemporary tale of the American Dream.

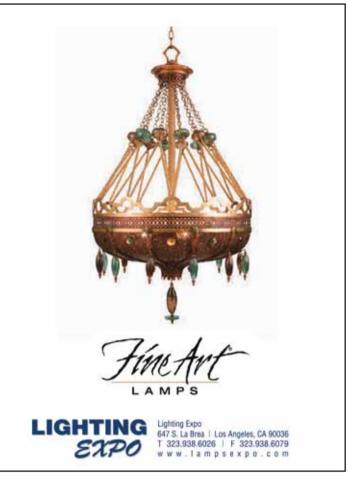
On the lighter side, SANTA CLAUSE 3, FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION and STRANGER THAN FICTION each provide their own take on comedic style.

On February 25th, the night of the Academy Awards, we join the SDSA Board of Directors in encouraging you to attend the Red Carpet Gala at the historic Alex Theater in Glendale, California. The event is intended "For the People who Make Movies and People who Watch Them." How fitting that it should be held at this classic and elegant movie palace, which has joined with the SDSA in presenting this event.

We send good wishes to you and yours for the end of the year and the beginning of the next.

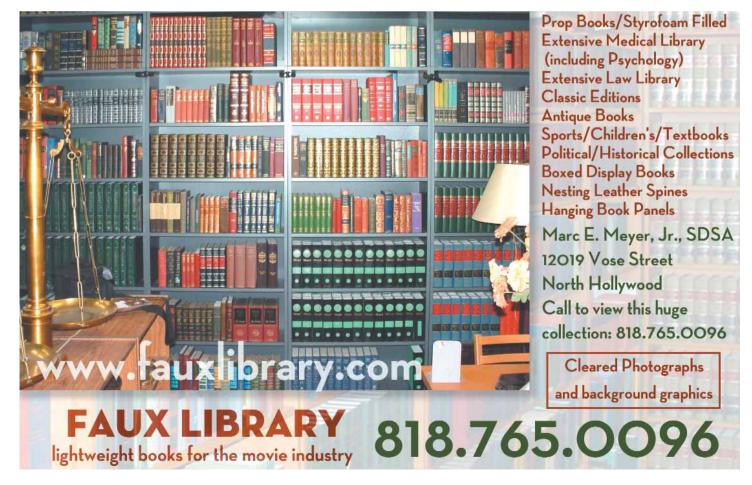
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### film

## The Good Shepherd

Set Decorator Gretchen Rau Supported by: Elaine O' Donnell SDSA Leslie E Rollins SDSA Alyssa Winter Production Designer Jeannine Oppewall Universal Studios

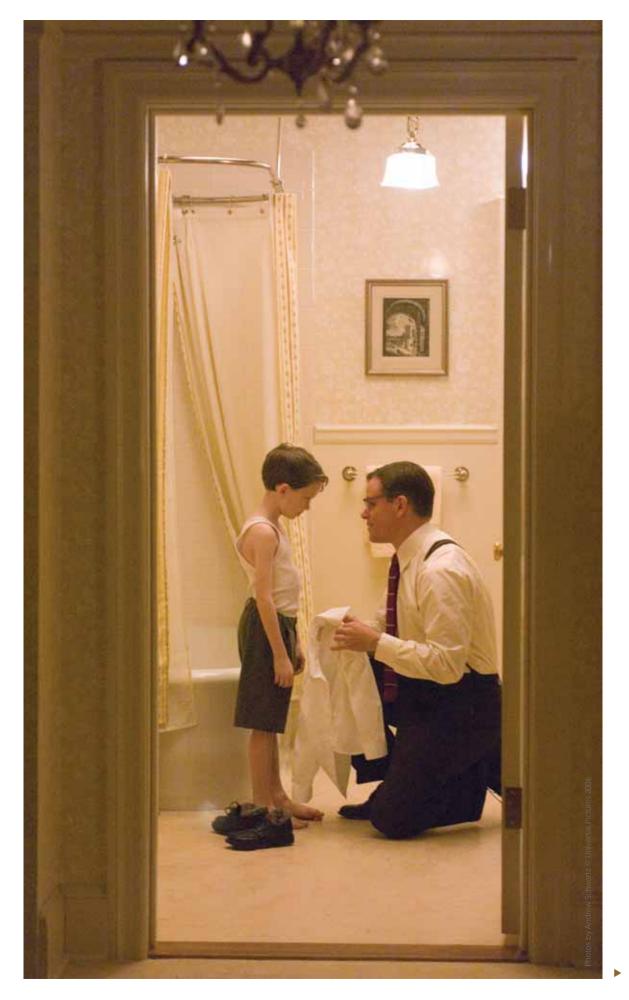
Personal tragedy becomes the occasion for a set decoration team's finest hour...

Set Decorator Gretchen Rau passed away on March 29, 2006, just at the end of principal photography on THE GOOD SHEPHERD and just after winning the Academy Award for Outstanding Art Direction for MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA with Production Designer John Myhre. That the set decoration team of THE GOOD SHEPHERD continues to exhibit undying loyalty toward her speaks volumes not only about Gretchen Rau's stature as a creative artist and human being, but for their own magnanimous spirit.





OPPOSITE *Edward Wilson* [Matt Damon] and *Edward Jr* [Tommy Nelson] having a father/son moment. Above left *Edward Wilson* [Matt Damon] as a child with his father [Timothy Hutton] in happier times. Above right *Edward Jr* [Tommy Nelson] discovers his father [Matt Damon] packing to leave on another work trip.





or ten years, Eric Roth's script THE GOOD SHEPHERD circulated Hollywood, earning a reputation as the industry's best unproduced screenplay. It passed through the hands of four directors until Robert De Niro's clout, passion and perseverance succeeded in bringing the story to the screen. The sprawling narrative spans the years 1925 to 1961, takes place on four continents, and required in excess of 130 sets. THE GOOD SHEPHERD tells the saga of the CIA's early years and how the Agency played a significant role in shaping the world as we know it today. The complex, far-reaching story told in THE GOOD SHEPHERD is rivaled only by the story of its making as a film.

On the art direction front, it is fundamentally the story of two strong women who took on the heady task of realizing an ambitious script and the mind-boggling logistical complexities of its production. When one of the women was felled by serious illness, the other faced the daunting responsibility of persuading others to carry their beloved colleague's vision to completion. Those who stepped forward did so out of loyalty and admiration for the women who had tackled the behemoth task of giving

THE GOOD SHEPHERD a physical world in which to live. To do so, they labored tirelessly and selflessly under extraordinarily trying circumstances. They succeeded in making the film a testimonial to Set Decorator Gretchen Rau's brilliance as well as to their own professionalism and invincible spirit.

### Elaine O'Donnell SDSA

Jeannine Oppewall, the production designer, commented, "Elaine O'Donnell accepted the mission no would else would take" when she agreed to handle sets to be shot in the Dominican Republic.

O'Donnell had only 2½ weeks to pull together the dressing for myriad sets including *Castro's Havana Office*, an apartment in *Leopoldville (The Congo)* and its many exterior sets, a *Haitian Market*, a *Presidential Residence in Guatemala*, an *airport in Rhodesia*, a *Caribbean KGB Spy Room* and a multitude of *street* scenes. She filled three shipping containers stateside bound for Santa Domingo.

On her arrival in the Dominican Republic, O'Donnell worked sixteen hours a day, seven days a week, through Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Russian foods acquired in Brighton Beach for use on the *KGB Spy Room* set were consumed by parties unknown. The *Leopoldville* building was "guarded" by men who brought friends in, partied on the sets and broke furniture. O'Donnell entered the lobby to find a guard conked out in a chair, gun in hand. She tiptoed past so as not to wake him. As the building lacked electricity, she often had to dress sets in the dark. On the subject of her work on the project, O'Donnell commented, "It was the hardest job I've done in my life. I took it only because of Gretchen and Jeannine."

### Alyssa Winter

Alyssa Winter began as the assistant set decorator, carried the baton when Rau had to leave and made herself guardian of Rau's intentions. Winter comments, "Gretchen was an incredibly gifted person who was able with a gentle touch

to bring a set to life. I always made sure I was following her vision."

Among the many headaches endured by the set decoration department was the lack of warehouse space available in New York at a time when the city's resources were maxed out by a full slate of film production.

"We started by storing things in a cramped corner of the Armory in Brooklyn in a filthy, unlit basement room," Winter remembers. "One day our corner was needed to build a Leopoldville Apartment set, so we moved all our furniture to the armory gymnasium. Then the gymnasium was needed to build a Mansion Bathroom and CIA Offices. So we moved eight truckloads of set decoration to a warehouse in another borough, all the while having to keep pace with the relentless shooting schedule."

"We were shooting period sets in and around New York City when none of the scenes were scripted for New York. Washington DC was shot on one side of the street and New Haven on the other. Sometimes it seemed we just couldn't catch a break. A fully decorated mansion that hadn't been



### film



A sampling of offices created for the film. Above *Edward Wilson* [Matt Damon] in his *study* when the *CIA* was in its nascence. Opposite *DCI Phillip Allen* [William Hurt] counsels *Edward Wilson* [Matt Damon] on the Bay of Pigs. Listening room in *Leopoldville, the Congo. Wilson* [Matt Damon] at his CIA desk in the 1960s. *Wilson* being briefed in the *CIA Technical Services Department* on surveillance photos from *Leopoldville*.









touched in fifty years was chosen. By the time we arrived to shoot, the house had been sold and the contents auctioned off. Even the sconces and chandeliers were gone. Another time, we filmed in a library where all the books had been taken away. The set dressers spent days applying labels to book spines to duplicate Yale's cataloguing system."

"I often found myself in the office at 10:00PM, and I was not the only one there. I stayed with this incredibly difficult show only in honor of Gretchen."

### Leslie E Rollins SDSA

Even before Rau realized she was ill, Leslie E Rollins SDSA came aboard to handle CIA sets spanning the years 1947 to

1961. Rollins believed that once those sets were shot, he would be free to move on to his next project. Rau's illness shifted much of the burden of completing the remaining New York work onto Rollins' shoulders. Doing so jeopardized another job he'd already agreed to do. He confesses it took Oppewall's trademark cajoling to persuade him to stay on.

Recalling his involvement with THE GOOD SHEPHERD, Rollins says, "Gretchen was an inspiration. She was legendary. We were always aware that it was Gretchen's movie. I got to do sets that I'd never had an opportunity to do before."

"It was an exhilarating team effort" he continues. "Our crew turned on a dime for De Niro." Rollins acquired vast quantities of specialized, vintage, hard-to-find technical equipment for the CIA operations scenes. He comments,

### film



"In Los Angeles, there are great resources available to the studios for virtually anything you'd need for a project. New York has far less. Finding the equipment proved a huge challenge."

Rollins notes, "What we do is entirely actor-driven. When the actor is available, the set has to be ready. That's the job we have. You operate within those parameters. I worked all through the Christmas break to prepare sets that had to be ready in early January. So did forty other people. Paintbrushes froze in the fourteen-degree weather."

### Teamwork

Others whose work far surpassed the call of duty are Tina Khayat, set decoration department coordinator, and Lead Phil Canfield. Oppewall points out, "I don't know how Tina did it. She was there all the time." About Canfield, she says, "There is no one in the business better than Phil. He runs a very tight ship with a crew most of whom are related to him

in one way or another. They never miss a beat."

### Commitment

When writers sit alone at their keyboards, spinning a world from their imaginations, they cannot and should not think of the hours of research, the resourcing, the arranging and coordinating of manufacturing and deliveries and the long hours and sometimes backbreaking labor their words will engender on the part of hundreds of crew members.

The set decorating crew on THE GOOD SHEPHERD made good on their commitment to excellence, fleshing out the writer's and director's visions far beyond what could be expected under the circumstances. Now it remains for the public to rise to the challenge of entering into the complex, demanding storyline the film-makers have crafted. One thing is certain: THE GOOD SHEPHERD is an achievement on many levels, from pictoral to personal. ■

--Kenneth Hunter



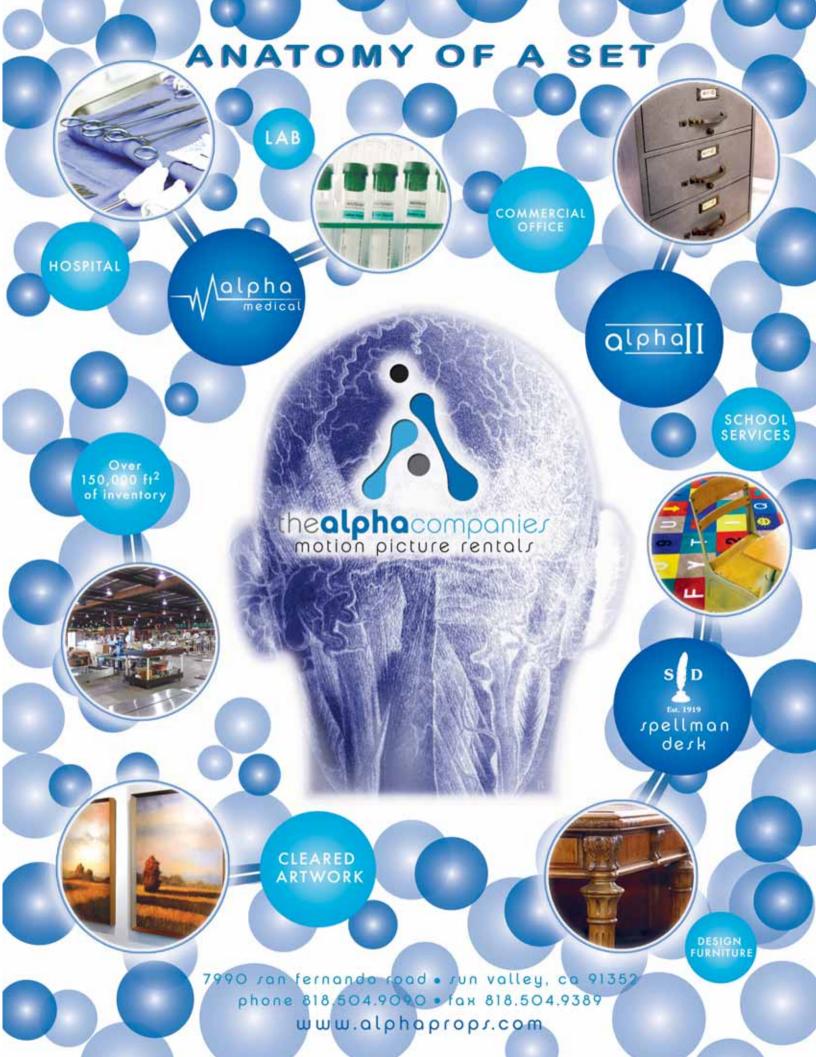


OPPOSITE DCI Phillip Allen [William Hurt] briefs Edward Wilson [Matt Damon] in the rubble of a soon to be divided Berlin immediately after the war. This set was built in Brooklyn, New York. ABOVE & LEFT Wilson inspects the scene of the crime in Leopoldville, The Congo. Like many of the sets for THE GOOD SHEPHERD, this one was built in the Brooklyn Armory which served as the film's primary stage facility.





An eclectic mix of interior furnishings including: furniture, lamps & lighting, area rugs, bed room suites, cleared artwork, and a vast collection of accessories including kid's room and kitchen. Our inventory is set up in showroom style for easy viewing.



### film

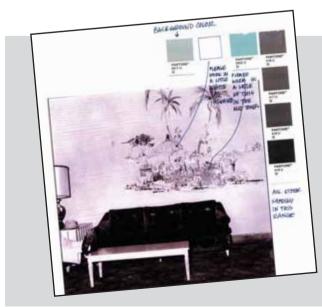


Production Designer Patti Podesta Set Decorator Lisa Fischer SDSA Additional Set Decorator Radha Metha The Weinstein Company

Emilio Estevez's BOBBY presents a fictional chronicle of the hours leading up to the assassination of Bobby Kennedy. It is the day of the California presidential primary, June 4, 1968. From a hotel busboy to a wealthy political contributor, the public and private lives of the 22 characters unfold as separately and together they move toward the Embassy Ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel and Bobby Kennedy's victory speech.

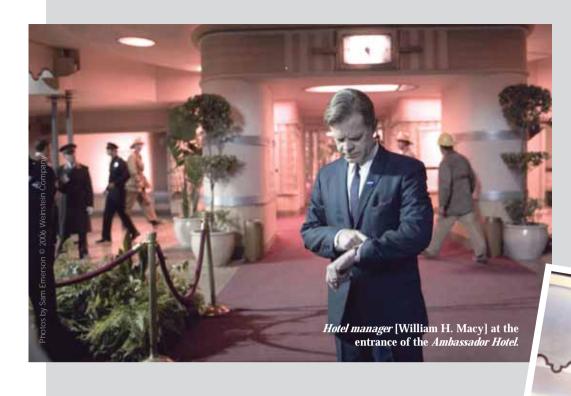
Limited in time and space to a single day on the hotel property, the film is nevertheless expansive and generous in scope and spirit. From the microcosm of the characters' lives, news clips of the actual historic period and recordings of Kennedy's speeches, we sense a wider world. Then there are the shots from an assassin's gun.

The look of BOBBY developed from the abstract ideas of Writer/Director Estevez into tangible forms and elements by Production Designer Patti Podesta and Set Decorators Lisa Fischer SDSA, who decorated the majority of the project, and Radha Metha, who came on board at the end of filming.



I chose the palette by starting with the documentary material, pulling secondary colors and neutrals from it, knowing it would produce continuity with the footage and evoke the sensation of the period. Emilio and I talked about a neutral atmosphere with an overlay of pointillist color. Naturalistic, plein-air color was in textiles and objects. I added to this the official colors of the hotel: black, red and gold, which I used sparingly, as punctuation, like a reminder of the place.

-Production Designer Patti Podesta



"What made the experience unique for me was that there were no personal sets. They were all public spaces. These reflect more the period in which they were created rather than the characters. I was glad to be part of a film telling the story of a time, not unlike now, in the search for an inspired leader."

- Set Decorator Lisa Fischer SDSA

The Ambassador Hotel was a character in and of itself in the film.

In addition to doing some justice to the historical event the film recreates, we had to try to do justice to the spirit of the Ambassador Hotel. It held so many memories for so many people, was so much a part of the history of Los Angeles, and now was being torn down while we were filming in it.

Hotels are, by definition, anonymous places; places people and events pass through. The hotel is a place out of time. It's as old as the 30s and as new as the 70s. It contains the glamour of Hollywood and is full of crumbling desires.

At our moment, the hotel is past its prime, almost waiting for its next incarnation. The *lobby, foyer* and *hotel rooms* all are neutral, enduring places with neoclassical details characterized by simple-shaped furniture, drapery, plants, artworks and signage. They are the public persona of the hotel.

The *Cocoanut Grove*, shops and pool are the frivolous places of the hotel, in which style is transient. And then there is the kitchen, which is neither of the other two, the place that is the most real, a working space...

-Production Designer Patti Podesta



Susan [Mary Elizabeth Winstead] serves coffee to novice Kennedy volunteers Cooper [Brian Geraghty] and Jimmy [Shia LeBeouf] in the coffee shop of the Ambassador Hotel.

excerpt from patti podesta's notes...

In the script there is the quality of flow/kinetic movement and then settling on a tableau or pictorial frame or Portrait... Portrait ; story: each is embedded in the other in this film more than in others, due to historical typing...the dialogue is also imPortant...must make a place that can contain both the arc of the tragedy and allow the dialogue to be heard .. Emilio wants the film to be of the moment and not an historical document ... what can we do in regard to the design to make this sensible...need to enhance the quality of sensuality, everywhere, in the textures and colors, with light, contrast, dust ...

### Re-creating the period, the day, means Research

We understood the film as the present embedded in the past, as a collection of moments that could be any day and yet became this particular, tragic day. To produce that quality on film, we had to look particularly at photography, because this is THE moment in American history when media images became part of our consciousness. I brought Emilio images from Philip Lorca diCorsia's book Heads and stills from European filmmaking, images by Gary Winograd and Dennis Hopper's black and white photography. I included images of the hotel circa '68 from the Los Angeles Library collection. I also brought my own memories of that Los Angeles, impressions of color and space that I tried to find visual references for because it was a different place then.

Emilio shared his collection of networks' live video feeds of that night. He had been working towards making this film for years and had all the documentation of the event. Because the hotel was remodeled in 1970 and changed a great deal, these sources were key in understanding the way we envision the period AND exactly how the Embassy Ballroom and Pantry looked.

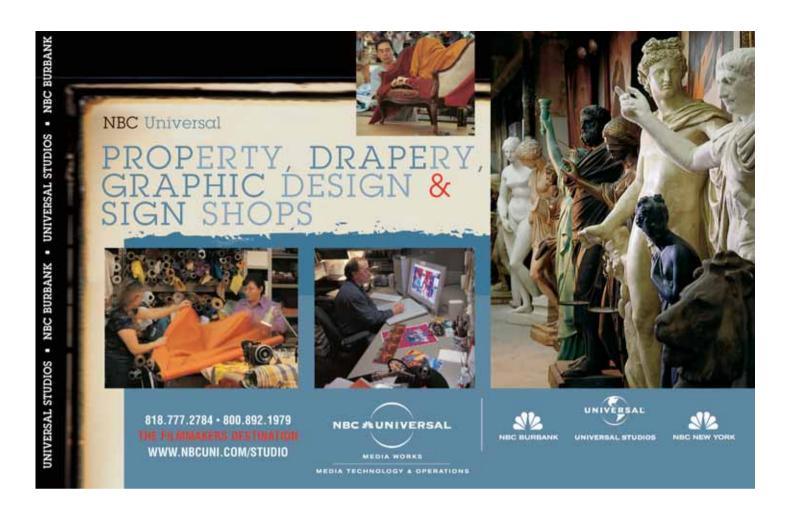
Costume Designer Julie Weiss lent me the photo album from her sister's wedding at the Ambassador in 1968, with reception in the Embassy Ballroom. The pictures were invaluable for details of wallpaper and lighting.

The most useful information about the design of the pantry came from an episode of Unsolved Mysteries about the assassination, which contained stills taken by the LAPD the day after. It was important to match those two rooms as closely as possible because we would be cutting back and forth between the file footage and our own.

Other photos came from the Film Commission, Location Manager Chris Baugh, and Sam Gailey, the last location manager for the Ambassador. We also looked at films that were shot at the Ambassador right around our moment, particularly THE GRADUATE and a black and white film about election politics, THE BEST MAN based on a book by Gore Vidal.

I remember looking at magazines from the year and noticing that the ads and products were so similar to those today. I remember thinking, "it's the same, we live in the same time, but now with no hope." And I used this idea throughout the design process.

-Production Designer Patti Podesta





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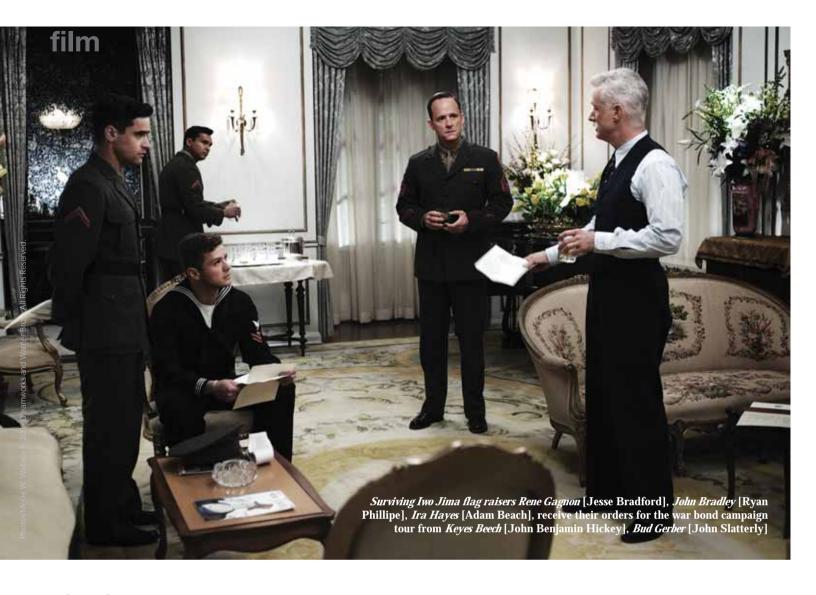
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wo stories unfold. While vastly divergent in scale and context, both stories are about people who consider themselves ordinary, not extraordinary. Both stories are about relationships bred from circumstance—relationships that within days or decades become the essence of loyalty, support, respect, and remembrance. Though the characters in these two stories will never meet, they will be forever connected through film.

### Mid-morning in the Garden of Richard and Audrey

The first story unfolds on a sunny September morning at the home of Set Decorator Richard C Goddard SDSA and his wife, retired Set Decorator Audrey Blasdel-Goddard. Outside on a poolside patio "Dick" Goddard, his longtime Lead John Schacht and Set Dresser Sandra "Sandi" Renfroe are seated on oversized wicker furniture shaded by a vine-covered trellis. It's been four months since they were last together, four months since legendary Production Designer/Art Director Henry Bumstead, their colleague and friend, passed away. Exceedingly humble, Goddard and his crew are reticent to discuss their successes, but eager to re-connect and reminisce about Bumstead, a man they'd come to know and love.

It's been almost a year since they finished FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS, which recounts the untold struggles of the three

surviving flag-raisers after Iwo Jima. FLAGS is the last movie Goddard, Schacht and Renfroe did with Bumstead.

A spry 90-year-old, Bumstead subsequently designed LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA, the FLAGS companion drama that tackles the battle through the eyes of the Japanese defenders. Behind this two-film endeavor is master storyteller and director Clint Eastwood. LETTERS was their thirteenth project together.

In May 2006, at the time of his death, 91-year-old Henry "Bummy" Bumstead had designed almost 100 films.

"First of all," says Goddard, "Everybody, and I mean everybody, called him, 'Bummy.' Not Henry, not Mr Bumstead, but Bummy. And Bummy was an 'art director.' He called himself an 'art man' or 'art director.' He never said 'production designer.'"

# FIAGS OFOUR FATHERS

Set Decorator Richard Goddard SDSA Set Decorato Alan Hicks SDSA Production Designer Henry Bumstead DreamWorks and Warner Bros

The first story unfolds on a sunny September morning at the home of Set Decorator Richard C Goddard SDSA and his wife, retired Set Decorator Audrey Blasdel-Goddard. Outside on a poolside patio "Dick" Goddard, his longtime Lead John Schacht and Set Dresser Sandra "Sandi" Renfroe are seated on oversized wicker furniture shaded by a vine-covered trellis. It's been four months since they were last together, four months since legendary Production Designer/Art Director Henry Bumstead, their colleague and friend, passed away. Exceedingly humble, Goddard and his crew are reticent to discuss their successes, but eager to re-connect and reminisce about Bumstead, a man they'd come to know and

Editor's note: Alan Hicks SDSA, who was on the East coast when this interview transpired, decorated the FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS sets in Chicago and Virginia.





Paramount, SAIGON, in 1948. His art direction garnered several awards and nominations, including Oscars® for THE STING and TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD. In 1986, circumstances brought Bumstead onto BLUE CITY. Goddard, was the set decorator. The connection was instant. Bumstead and Goddard would collaborate on 13 films, including eight with Eastwood. Schacht led on all eight Eastwood films, and Renfroe worked on six.

### The Four Amigos

"They work as a total team," says Blasdel-Goddard. "Have you ever heard of a leadman being with a set decorator for 25 years?" she asks, referring to John Schacht and her husband. After her own 43-year decorating career, Blasdel-Goddard also is a fountain of knowledge, bubbling with history and anecdotes from 'the old days.'

"The leadman," says Blasdel-Goddard, "is the most important. Let me tell you about John Schacht," she continues, "He has the personality of 45 of the best people you'd ever meet in your life, all rolled into him." Without prompting, she adds, "And, Dick never gets mad. He never talks back, and he never bawls anyone out, which I don't understand. I mean, I did that. But, he never does. And then to have a leadperson who is equally nice, or nicer—it's just incredible."

Blasdel-Goddard and Goddard worked together in the early 1970s. He credits her with launching his career. Goddard won an Emmy Award in 1978 for the TV movie ZIEGFELD AND HIS WOMEN. Then, the same year, "I did the DEER HUNTER. I think back and I didn't know what I was getting into," he says. It's clear Goddard respects a decorator's job. As he explains it: "We're supposed to create a background so nothing stands out. This is one reason "Bummy always used neutral colors, never anything off-the-wall."



Goddard also respects the importance of working as a team. He recognizes the talents and skills each crew member brings to the team, and emphasizes the importance of making sure that, as a decorator, everybody is involved. "My theory has always been," says Goddard, "The better people you have, the better they make you look. Whether dressing desks in a newspaper office or squats in a homeless camp, when everyone has their own little thing, they're really involved."

He credits Renfroe with her knack for tracking down obscure pieces, like a teletype they needed for FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS. "She found one in San Diego and proceeded to send the owner notes and photos from the production." Renfroe replies, "Dick is one of the working decorators. He's in the middle of it, working with you."

Collaboration and acknowledgement were qualities Bumstead also embodied. Goddard notes, "Clint would come in and say, 'Wow Dick, this is great. This is wonderful.' And I'd

say, 'No Clint, Bummy did it,' because it all starts with the production designer. Then Bummy would always say, 'Dick Goddard did this.'"

Illustrating the success of their collaborative philosophy, Schacht recounts one time when they all pitched in to set-up a realistic *homeless camp* for ALMOST AN ANGEL. "We went back to strike it the next morning, and it was already gone. The city had received complaints about the camp. So they went down there, piled everything into dump trucks and took it all away. I remember saying, 'God, we should take these guys with us more often!' That was a real feather in our cap."

### **Love and Bullets**

The second story of respect and remembrance begins on February 23, 1945. Four days after an initial 30,000 American soldiers land on Iwo Jima, five Marines and one Navy corpsman dodge death to reach the summit of Mount Suribachi. In a fleeting moment of triumph, they raise the American flag. Their image, captured haphazardly by young AP photographer Joe Rosenthal, inspired hope and ignited patriotism in the hearts of Americans drowning in personal and collective loss. They became instant heroes, ambassadors of victory. But the inescapable carnage raged on for four more weeks, claiming almost all of the 21,000 Japanese defenders and resulting in 26,000 casualties.

### Billion-Dollar Boys

The United States government seized on the palpable optimism and quickly returned the three surviving flag-raisers, John Bradley (Ryan Phillipe), Rene Gagnon (Jesse Bradford), and Ira Hayes (Adam Beach) to America's open arms. Tortured by horrors they'd witnessed and comrades they'd left behind, their grief was compounded amidst the celebratory fervor of the seventh war-bond campaign and their required tour. Inconceivably, the tour raised billions. But omitted from the patriotic headlines was another story, a story of common boys bewildered by war and their sudden status as uncommon heroes.

### Letters from Iwo Jima

Through the lives of the returning flag-raisers the film examines the juxtaposition of personal and public concepts of heroism and celebrity and how publicity and propaganda distort these ideas, feed the masses and ultimately create a perceived reality.

The reality of the young men-turned-heroes was always there. Only Naval Corpsman John "Doc" Bradley lived to see old age, and he never spoke of Iwo Jima. It wasn't until after his death in 1994 that his son James discovered artifacts from his father's early life. The son wanted to know more about the secret that had outlived his father—and silenced the man.

### A Fist Full of Dollars

Published in 2000, James Bradley's book FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS, co-authored with Ron Powers, became a bestseller. The story captured Clint Eastwood's attention, but Steven Spielberg had already acquired the rights. They struck a deal,



and Eastwood agreed to direct the film. Bradley was a great resource. Aside from answering questions, he also provided details of the memorabilia he had discovered in his father's office, much of which was re-created for the film.

### A Perfect World

Originally, the filmmakers envisioned filming the key battle scenes on Iwo Jima. Eastwood traveled to the island, scouted locations and met with Japanese officials. Iwo Jima is considered sacred ground. So, despite the Japanese government's gracious agreement to allow filming, the filmmakers decided not to shoot there. The search began for an alternate location.

On the southwest Icelandic coast, the small town of Sandvik lures little else than the die-hard surfer. Even during summer months, chilled Atlantic swells, powerful riptides and gusty winds pound the ebony beach. Subject to extreme weather and accessible by sea or sand, Sandvik carries its own host of logistical hurdles; but its uncommon barren black

beaches and *Mount Suribachi* stand-in made Iceland a perfect *Iwo Jima*.

### Far and Away

Following six weeks of prep, Goddard and Schacht trekked to Iceland with Eastwood and crew. Bumstead and Renfroe stayed in Los Angeles to scout locations and prepare for their return. There were still 60 sets to locate and/or create, design and dress in Los Angeles alone, as well as locations in Washington DC and Chicago. Transforming the naked Icelandic beach into the site of the historic bloodbath was only the first phase of this epic production.

### **Blood Work**

Their mission was to re-create the progressive, battle-worn destruction and to build an enormous tent city, which they were able to construct; predominately from tents and decor Goddard and Schacht had used five years prior on the set of WINDTALKERS.



...Their image, captured haphazardly by young AP photographer Joe Rosenthal, inspired hope and ignited patriotism in the hearts of Americans drowning in personal and collective loss.

The *Tent City* set and all the set dressing was loaded into five cargo containers and shipped to Iceland. After the voyage, the sea containers were brought on shore about ¼ mile from where they were shooting. Schacht explains, "We had to keep adding [to the set] to show the various stages of the invasion." Goddard ads, "For example, on day one there was only so much on the beach, then on day two there was this much on the beach and so on."

The first day before filming, an aggressive wind sent two shipping containers flying off a cargo ship and barreling into the ocean.

Accuracy and attention to detail were crucial in re-creating the documented devastation of battle scenes. They poured over old photographs and footage and consulted with experts, survivors, eyewitnesses to the real events.

### Any Which Way You Can

A temporary 6,000-mile separation would add a challenge to any decorating team, especially for a crew that is accustomed to working without cell phones, computers, digital cameras or e-mail. But Goddard and his crew made it work. Goddard admits he'd be happy to throw the cell phones out the window; however, Renfroe reminds him that they never would have finished all the sets without being able to talk to the drivers via cell phone.

Goddard, Bumstead and Schacht did most communicating in person, in the truck. Goddard muses, "Bummy always rode with us, not with the echelon." Even in his nineties, Bumstead never had trouble hearing Goddard, who would talk amid buzzing traffic from the back seat. His vision was still great; he never needed glasses or contacts. And he never had a cavity.

Bumstead still designed all of his sets with pencil and paper. "Bummy was old-school, like me," says Goddard. The same could probably be said of Schacht who keeps a detailed record of expenditures for each set using a legal pad and accordion folder, his portable office. Apparently, this system has kept them on or below budget for twenty years. Incidentally, they'd never incurred any L&D until this film, "Remember, says Schacht, "we broke that barbershop pole..."

### Never Say Goodbye

Schacht recalls, "Bummy would often say, 'Well Dick, you put me over again.' Bummy appreciated Dick and all of us so much. "We're like family. We spend more time together in total waking hours than we do with our own families. So we had better get along and take care of each other. And we always did."

--Sarah Cordi

Editor's note: FLAGS of our FATHERS was dedicated to Henry Bumstead and casting director Phyllis Huffman.







OVERLEAF Lena Brandt [Cate Blanchett] going to Emil's hiding place in the bombed & flooded UBahn tunnel ABOVE Lena & Hannalore's Apartment in Berlin shot on stage at Sunset Gower Studios in Hollywood OPPOSITE Lena [Cate Blanchett] in the kitchen at the stove.



irector Steven Soderbergh, Production Designer Philip Messina and Set Decorator Kristen Toscano Messina SDSA seemed to have literally stepped back in time to the late 1940s in the making of the film THE GOOD GERMAN. Working with and matching archival film stock, Soderbergh decided to film in the manner of the time, utilizing similar lenses and lighting, and having sets designed and decorated as if they were being shot in that era.

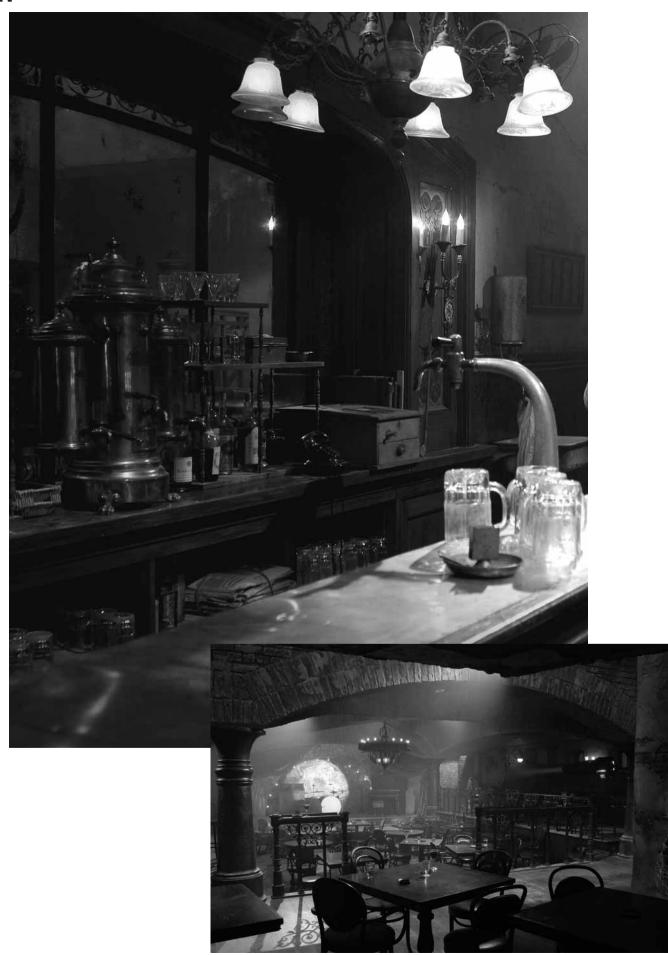
The set decorator and the production designer offer us personal notes on this unique filmmaking experience.

### Set Decorator Kristen Toscano Messina SDSA:

When we first heard that Steven wanted to make THE GOOD GERMAN, we were very excited. When we heard how he planned to approach it, we figured it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to work in a totally different style of filmmaking, harking back to the days when almost everything was shot on stage and on the studio backlots. Most often, what we have done has been reality-based, so we were excited to have a chance to create something much more theatrical. We watched many films from the period and marveled at the matte shots and painted

backdrops and thought about how at that point in time, the audience was accustomed to this representation of reality. It would be fun and liberating to work with this filmic vocabulary.

I started by researching some particularly German period details and used both eBay and an assistant in Berlin to gather telephones, tea kettles, light fixtures, textiles, wartime paper ephemera and a few choice furniture pieces. The rest came from prophouses. Actually, there were many pieces in the prophouses that were of German origin which excited me each





ABOVE Lena & Hannalore's Apartment Bed Room. Robin Weigert as Hannalore and George Clooney as Jake Geismer.

OPPOSITE The Bugi Wugi Club where Lena [Cate Blanchett] and Hannelore [Robin Weigert] entertain the GIs.

time I made a find. And of course there were many other European pieces which worked as well. But in the end, I wasn't too dogmatic about it, with the exception of being true to the time period, because I knew that I was probably selecting from many of the same options as a decorator in the 1940s would have had. There is such a sense of film history in the prophouses. I found myself wondering whether a certain chair may have been used in CASABLANCA or FOREIGN AFFAIR or any other great film of the time. I watched those films keeping an eye out for any familiar object from my travels through the Warner Bros and Universal property departments.

Working in black and white brought an added level of aesthetic concern for me. Although my first thought was that I would be liberated by an approach where "anything goes" in terms of color, in reality, I didn't want to decorate a room that didn't look right in color as well as black and white. As always, we were creating an environment for the actors to perform in and wanted it to be perfect for them (and us) in the moment, as well as on film. So in that sense, I was thinking not only about whether the blue upholstery of an arm chair would look right with the green wallpaper, but how the color would translate into black and white and whether the pattern would add enough texture once the hue was



ABOVE *Tully's Barracks. Tully* [Toby Maguire] with his collection of *pin-up girls*.

OPPOSITE *Bernie's Office* in the *American Headquarters in Berlin*. The set was built on location in downtown Los Angeles.

eliminated. The elimination of color requires a surface to have something else of interest, so pattern and texture and tonal contrast become even more important.

### Production Designer Philip Messina:

Some of the biggest challenges of scale were in the scenes scripted as exteriors. We chose the Universal backlot because it offered the most options. It essentially came down to planning the shots and coverage to a very specific degree because many of the backlot locations offered just a few angles before you saw off the set. We chose to insert the more heavily damaged buildings in between the pre-existing ones that we damaged to a lesser degree. The huge upside was that I didn't have to concern myself with repainting the backlot as the B&W made the existing disparate colors read more tonally coherent.

European Street at Universal was by far our biggest set as we took over the adjacent parking lot and constructed a block's worth of bombed-out buildings and mountains of rubble. This area also doubled for another location, and we achieved this by redressing a selected length of the street and using signs written backwards (as well as military outfits done in reverse) so that we

could flip the film. In the final cut, you can see the butcher shop which is the piece we shot in reverse and then in the very next shot, the same section of the block redressed as an entirely different street.

Our challenge to ourselves regarding the backlot was to limit the use of CGI set extensions and matte paintings as much as possible. And in the end we were quite successful, mostly due to the style in which Steven designed shots with an economy of movement, mostly dollying in and out and simple pans. We were able to represent the scale of the city by cutting in archival footage. Most shots were sewn in so seamlessly that I've been momentarily fooled as to what was ours and what was the real thing.

As far as the interior sets were concerned, I really wanted to keep a certain simplicity to the imagery. We used a significant amount of texture on the walls as I knew that there would be a lot of hard-raking light thrown on them. I wanted the walls to have varying degrees of "tooth" in order to catch the light. We also found in our research that there just wasn't a lot of 'stuff' around. People had sold their possessions to buy food and even burned their furniture for firewood to survive the winter, so we chose very carefully the items that occupied the sets.



### Set Decorator Kristen Toscano Messina SDSA:

THE GOOD GERMAN is a dramatic story of wartime crime, sin and redemption, and in the course of our research, we often learned heart-wrenching details of the war. Researching images for the hospital scene, we found pictures of the facilities where the Nazis performed medical experiments on Jewish children. In photos of Berlin streets you can see little bits of paper taped to doors and windows and writing in chalk on many walls. These are notes from families searching for lost loved ones. All the while we were creating a stylized and theatrical film referencing the films of another era, we were reminded that we were also capturing a tragic moment in human history.







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Costello's World Frank Costello [Jack Nicholson] talks business with his new employee Billy Costigan [Leonardo DiCaprio] while lunching in his penthouse apartment.



# THE DE PART-ED

Set Decorator Leslie E Rollins SDSA Assistant Set Decorator Christine Moosher SDSA Production Designer Kristi Zea Warner Bros

The dramatic hit film THE DEPARTED gives an unflinching look at double lives in the worlds of law enforcement and crime as portrayed by moles *Colin* [Matt Damon] and *Billy* [Leonardo DiCaprio]. Each man becomes consumed by his double life, gathering information about the plans and counter-plans of the operation he has penetrated.

But when it becomes clear to both the gangsters, led by crime boss *Frank Costello* [Jack Nicholson], and the police that they have a mole in their midst, *Billy* and *Colin* find themselves in constant danger of being caught and exposed to the enemy. Each must race to uncover the identity of the other man in time to save himself.

"It's like *Billy* and *Colin* are running on parallel tracks," Director Martin Scorsese says. "But they will ultimately end up on a collision course."

SET DECOR spoke with Set Decorator Leslie E Rollins SDSA about the creation of this uncompromising film.

SET DECOR: How did the sets offer visual hints to the "collision course" Scorcese mentions?

**Set Decorator Leslie Rollins SDSA:** When I first read the script it was obvious that *Colin* and *Billy* were living parallel lives that would ultimately intersect. However, *Colin* being the ambitious striver that he is and *Billy* being the virtually homeless outsider, have little in common.

What I found more fascinating than their commonalities were their differences. *Colin* seeks a life in the glow of the golden dome of *Beacon Hill*, living the good life with wealthy people. *Billy* simply wants stability and a home. One of the most poignant elements of the story is the fact that *Billy* sleeps on the sofa in his *dead mother's* nearly empty and haunted *living room*. *Colin* has surrounded himself with the trappings of the upwardly mobile life while *Billy* is desperately trying to connect to some element of his past.

At one point in the story, *Colin's* life has closed in around him, his apartment filled up with the possessions of both his and his new wife *Madolyn's* lives, while *Billy's* world is almost empty. Later, after *Madolyn* comes to her senses and leaves *Colin*, both men live in what amount to haunted houses.

Colin desires everything that he feels is his due: all the trappings of Costello's world. The big difference is that Colin's choices are bereft of Costello's complex character. Colin does not want any trace of his origins in Southie to show through. As a result, his furniture, art and music are almost soulless. We used slick, shiny surfaces, hard edges and black, grey, colorless fabrics to furnish his expensive but banal high-rise co-op apartment.

In contrast, *Costello's* world is soft, warm and worn, reflecting his all powerful, confident character. Nicholson portrayed *Costello* as an art collector, cook and wine connoisseur. He envisioned *Costello* as a painter, so I created an area near the expansive windows overlooking *Boston harbor* that functioned as a sort of casual atelier. Because Marty wanted *Costello* to have a fine library, I provided an extensive and carefully selected collection of rare and first editions by Irish authors. I gave him an interest in race horses and, of course, women. Danica Derpic of D2 provided fantastic nudes in almost every medium from drawings and oils to sculpture.

Costello's world is one of luxury and indulgence. The apartment location chosen for him was the top floor of a high rise

overlooking Boston Harbor. The apartment was smaller than Marty would have liked, so we had to play all sorts of visual tricks to make it seem larger and more luxurious. Production Designer Kristi Zea put mirror reveals on the windows to increase the apparent width of the view. I used silver leaf on the ceiling coffers and extensive indirect and down lighting to expand the room.

The apartment really came to life in the night shots when we were able to take full advantage of the lighting we'd installed. As shooting went on, however, we found out that Nicholson does not like to work nights. Many of the night shots were moved to daytime, so we lost some of the shadowy mystery we'd been striving for.

We also concentrated on an interplay of sumptuous textures. I chose mohair, silk, leather and wools for upholstery and floor coverings. We had a solid acrylic coffee table and replicas of the Normandie Grille Room chairs custom made. We based the chairs on photos from the original publicity materials for the art deco ocean liner. There was a definite feeling of luxury in the apartment even though it was very small. My original image was



### Billy's World

Billy's private world is represented almost exclusively through the lens of his mother's life. Having married his father against her wealthy family's wishes and cast out, she raised Billy in a small, elegant house furnished with a few old family antiques. The majority of these have now been sold or claimed by other family members. It is in this nearly empty house that Billy camps out, surrounded by the few pieces left from his mother's past Brahmin life.



of a dark, womblike monochromatic space. We did manage to stay fairly true to that spirit.

### SD: Did Nicholson's perspective add an appreciative dimension to your set dressing?

**LR:** Jack most definitely impacted our choices. I had always regarded the character of *Costello* as a renaissance man, debauched and immoral though he might be. It was Jack's idea that *Costello* was a painter which led to a revision in our choices of art throughout.

The greatest impact was a new scene with two hookers that he added to illuminate *Costello's* debauched and perverted character. We ended up building a very elaborate 3-wall *bedroom* set on stage in New York that needed to appear to be in the *apartment in Boston*. Jack had a clear idea of what he wanted. We covered the walls in blue crushed velvet, topped the windows with gilt valances, hung heavy silk brocade drapery and gave him an enormous over-the-top bed. I prepared a portfolio of art for him to select from. The overall effect was very "pimpstyle" and worked amazingly well.

I am a firm believer that actors know better than anyone what their characters like and don't like. Given the opportunity I always welcome actor input. Most of the time, I wish they had more to say about their character's environments. I don't understand why there is not an accepted avenue of communication between the set decorator and the actors. As far as I'm concerned we always benefit from actor input.

### SD: Thomas B Duffy, a 30-year veteran of the Massachusetts State Police served as a technical consultant for the film. Did you have the benefit of Duffy's expertise?

**LR:** Tom was fantastic. He quickly grasped the relationships between all the players and departments and learned to communicate in a unique way with each of us.

It is always surprising to novice technical advisors what will interest the set decorator. We want to know as much about what is in their trash cans as what is on their walls. Tom got pretty good at thoroughly answering questions. After the first couple of weeks, he began writing well-researched responses on each issue.

One of the most important contributions he made was to invite my long-time assistant Christine Moosher SDSA and me to MSPHQ for several days of interviews and tours. Many of the troopers, detectives and secretaries were indispensable in providing insider knowledge and sources. We were invited into a number of trooper's homes for invaluable firsthand observation. Christine was even able to get copies of actual forms, awards and photos that we then reproduced.

We invited Tom to the set several times for in-progress walkthroughs so he could point out anything he felt was false or inaccurate. He was very happy with the final result and

impressed with the lengths set decorators go to for accuracy.

SD: Director of Photography Michael Ballhaus ASC, who had previously teamed with Scorsese on six films, states, "I don't think Marty and I have ever talked so much about lighting. The whole movie was somewhat influenced by film noir. We lit it almost like a black-and-white film, especially in the police station." Tell us about how this noiresque theme affected your decisions and decoration.

**LR:** There is a shadowy world hidden behind the doors to our *squad room*. The original interiors on which our set was based were lit almost exclusively with fluorescents. The ceiling system that Kristi designed had built-in lighting grids for which I had over 300 metal diffusers made. Then when Michael made the decision to light the set exclusively with down lights, those diffusers became masks for the lighting grid above. It actually worked out perfectly.

Our color palette was limited from the beginning: Grey, brown,





ABOVE & RIGHT *Costello's Kitchen* reflects his passion for the things of life and the experience of it, while *Colin's* gives evidence of a hollow life.





Special Investigations Police
Detective Colin Sullivan [Matt
Damon], mob boss Costello's mole,
meets with Captain Queenan
[Martin Sheen] about the identity
of the mob infiltrator. The palette
for the entire building was
purposely almost colorless.

Colin's Apartment reveals the superficiality, the trappings of an empty spirit.



and blue accented with hard metallic chrome and bronze anodized aluminum. The set is almost colorless. It is a very chilling effect.

SD: You worked with Production Designer Kristi Zea on THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, but this was your first experience working with Martin Scorcese as director. Was he collaborative with the whole crew? Or did he stay focused on the acting and camerawork?

**LR:** Marty is very focused on the actors. He limits the number of people in his circle to minimize distractions. This makes our job very challenging. When he walks onto a set, he knows exactly what is right and what feels false. He may not know (or care to know) every detail of the reality of police procedure, but he understands human nature.

In the end this is far more important than knowing the details of a cop's trophy case or closet. If I've done my job properly he shouldn't ever have to worry about those technical matters.

I thoroughly enjoy working with Kristi. She is one of the sunniest personalities I know. It's funny that the two movies we have done together should be so dark!

### SD: What were some of your biggest hurdles?

Our biggest hurdles were technical problems. With a cast as high-powered as this, there are bound to be scheduling conflicts and commitments to be honored. This required an almost continual rescheduling of work so that sets we thought we had weeks to prep suddenly got moved up to next Monday. No decorator is a stranger to this situation, as more and more actors' commitments dictate the daily schedule. It is as much a part of our jobs these days as selecting fabrics and light fixtures.

### SD: What resources did you rely on most? What new ones did you discover?

**LR:** The most important resource I have is my crew. Assistant Set Decorator Christine Moosher and I have worked together for ten years. Lead Dave Weinman, Set Decorating Coordinator Susan Perlman, Graphics Designer Derick Kardos and Buyer Harriet Zucker are all key players and important members of our set decorating team.

Any set decorator will tell you that it is the crew that makes you look good.

I am also so happy to have met and had the opportunity to work with Keira Curcio, our assistant in Boston. Buyer Sophie Carlihan acted as our initial liaison with the MSP during Christine's first visits. We brought Lead Chris Vogt from New York to work with the Boston set dressing crew. I would not hesitate to work with any of the Boston crew again.



## ÉJAVU

WHEN YOU KNOW TOO MUCH

Set Decorator Rosemary Brandenburg SDSA
Production Designer Chris Seagers
Walt Disney/Bruckheimer Films

DÉJÀ VU prepped in New Orleans in the summer of 2005 with the plan to start shooting in October. The crew was evacuated on Saturday, August 27th, on a charter plane in the path of Hurricane Katrina which made landfall in the wee hours of Monday, August 29th.

After the storm, flooding, deaths, hunger and thirst, looting, homelessness, loss and general tragic mayhem, the film almost fell apart. But Director Tony Scott, Producer Jerry Bruckheimer, and Denzel Washington were determined to make it in New Orleans. Three months later, the film geared back up, prepping in December and January, shooting in February. Set Decorator Rosemary Brandenburg SDSA gives a very personal insight into the various experiences of DÉJÀ VU.





ave you heard the truism that the themes of a film often work their way into the process of making it? On horror movies about ghosts you could swear the set is haunted; weird things happen. While making comedies and kids' movies the atmosphere is likely light and fun for the working crew.

Making DÉJÀ VU flaunted this quality, like a Krewe de Vieux Mardi Gras reveler in the French Quarter. We hit so many moments of aching irony during the making of this film, it was exhausting.

Real vs. surreal. The past layering itself over the present, and vice versa. A crime thriller about a fictional disaster, made in the middle of a huge real disaster. It was more than odd.

Some personal recollections about the making of DÉJÀ VU:

### The town, after the storm

...I was thrilled to experience the French Quarter without hordes of tourists. I was very relieved that the murder rate dropped significantly, as the city now had a fraction of its former inhabitants. I felt guilty about feeling good about these things.

...Local New Orleans crewmembers were distracted by their losses and the lack of response from FEMA or their insurance companies. Sometimes a crewmember would be unable to put down the cell phone while attempting to move furniture or dress a set. All of them welcomed the distraction of work from the stress of living in the middle of a disaster zone.

...Familiar vendors were gone, flooded, looted, missing. New sources for set dressing and services had to be found. We shipped lots of things in from LA. The price of lumber skyrocketed. Dumpsters and cyclone fencing costs doubled.

...The eerily regimented FEMA trailer parks looked starkly hot, since there are no trees in the empty lots where they are still set up. The contractors laid down gravel, and installed PVC plumbing and sewer pipes that ran in crazy white snake patterns on top of the ground among the rows of white metal boxes. Many of their inhabitants had lived for generations in traditional New Orleans houses, owned free and clear, and are now suddenly without any of the currency that provides mobility in our world.

...Whole Foods opened back up in January on Magazine Street, after a tornado spinning off Katrina hit it and it was flooded and looted. The elation among the well-heeled shoppers, including me, was palpable.

... Everyone complained about not being able to sleep, anxiety attacks, gaining weight, stories of people they know that have committed suicide.

... Experiencing the local Mardi Gras parades and costume balls in the weeks that led up to Fat Tuesday just reinforced the general irony in the atmosphere. FEMA trailer floats, Blue Roof Krewes, rude effigies of Ron Brown, Governor Blanco, Mayor Nagin, all paraded by, especially at the irreverent Krewe de Vieux (refers to Vieux Carre, or French Quarter) Parade. Obviously, the ingrained creativity of the New Orleanians erupted after the troubles.

...Our hotel was home for many government contractors. There was a surfeit of special ops military guys. I found out at the hotel bar that they served as bodyguards to the FEMA officials. They all drove SUV's and had major weaponry, which was an eye opener in the elevator at 6AM.

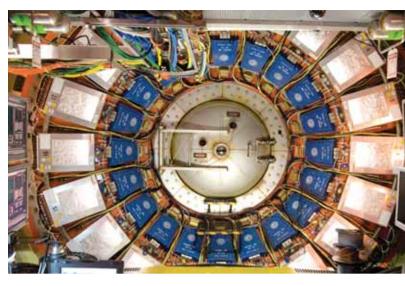
### The research

...Our ATF advisor is a nice guy who, during his career found the key evidence, the VIN number on the van axle, to solve the Oklahoma City bombing. He tells me that the "National Security Industry is the pony to ride for the next 5 years." This means big business in special response vehicles, elaborate tents for decontamination and field hospitals or HQ's, field morgues, the marketing of fear and danger.

...The Emergency Medical convention was held at the now infamous New Orleans Convention Center, the weekend I was evacuated before Katrina. Before we left, Disaster Response vendors showed me wide arrays of equipment for the MCI (Mass Casualty Incident), from tricked out vehicles to incident command workbooks, to special red, yellow, or green plastic tarps on which to lay out surviving victims, the colors indicating the level of their injuries. They told me, helpfully, that the dead bodies would not be moved right away. Emergency personnel would tie them to trees, signs, whatever, with rope to keep them in place until the crime scene detectives could collect any evidence revealed by their demise.

Later, I learned that many of the tricked out demo emergency vehicles at the convention were parked at a downtown lot when the conventioneers were evacuated, left for the local rescue crews to use. They were flooded immediately and were useless after that.

...I met Dr. Frank Minyard, the Coroner of Orleans Parish at the city morgue the week before Katrina. This was one of the great research tours: ancient *blood soaked* chunks of crude wood serve as head blocks. A plastic bag shrouds the phone to keep the fluids out. Plywood coffins made by prisoners are stacked in the hall to use for paupers' burials. Coroners here don't use protective gear at all; in LA they have full biosuits to keep from getting TB and HIV. Upstairs from the primitive morgue the lab is bristling with up to



Time machine: The Time Lab set was built in Los Angeles after the New Orleans portion of the shoot. A major, rapid-paced effort among the entire group: art department, set decoration, construction and paint, and prop shop. Inspiration was drawn from the imaging technologies involved in particle accelerators.

date analysis equipment. The murder rate is through the roof, mostly due to criminal turf wars, so every dead body is analyzed for drugs. The results help the police figure out drug trade routes.

This building was inundated and completely destroyed a few days after my tour.

After Katrina I heard Dr. Minyard on NPR several times being interviewed from his makeshift morgue tent set up out in the suburbs. He is the one who torpedoed many of the grisliest rumors coming out of the Superdome about murders there.

### A surreal life

Creating a fake disaster in the middle of a real disaster, I sometimes felt like such a voyeur. I observed what the locals went through, and felt privileged to be in New Orleans at some of its most vulnerable moments.

Even though the process of filmmaking was in some ways made more difficult by being in Katrina's wake, I was constantly amazed at the locals' enthusiasm to help us out. They really wanted to show that their city was back, could be a contender. But it still felt strange asking people who were displaced from living in their own homes and now had to commute across the bridge to work downtown, to take a detour or wait while we pretended to blow up one of their ferries in the middle of the Mississippi river.

I am full of gratitude to my crew and suppliers in New Orleans, especially New Orleans Lead Mike Johnson, Assistant Set Decorator Kristin Bicksler, and Set Dresser Joanne Schmidt; as well as to our Los Angeles based team, notably Art Director Drew Boughton, Lead Scott Baily, Key Buyer Missy Parker, Draper Abraham Vorster, and Set Decoration Coordinator Beverley Barritt.





Set Decorator Jennifer Williams SDSA
Production Designer Geoffrey Kirkland
Production Designer Jim Clay
Universal

HILDREN OF MEN resonates with political insight and societal implications that presented great challenges for Set Decorator Jennifer Williams SDSA and Production Designers Geoffrey Kirkland and Jim Clay as they interpreted the future for Director Alfonso Cuaron.

Based on the PD James novel, the setting is *London*, 2027. This is where the complexities began for the art direction team, who has worked together on many films in what Williams describes as a symbiotic relationship. "Geoffrey is a fantastic production designer to work with as he sees our working partnership as one of equals. He believes that art direction is a tiered job that cannot be properly executed unless everyone on the team works completely side-by-side."

Filming in London, where the union situation is very different than in the USA, the job requires the set decorator to research

everything from set building to furnishings to props. The set decorator oversees handprops and animals as well as conducting comprehensive research to support the visionary themes of the project. As an example, Williams spent many hours investigating modern armory and weapons in order to develop and source the look for the military state portrayed in the film. Follow-through was then provided by armor specialists on-set.

### The Future: 2027

Williams' extensive research supported Director Alfonso Cuaron and Cinematographer Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki ASC as they expanded and refined their vision.

Cuaron told an audience at the Directors Guild of America,



ABOVE *Theo* [Clive Owen] and Jasper [Michael Caine] in Jasper's forest retreat. RIGHT Bexhill Refugee Camp

"The production design [and decor] honored the premise of 2027, but without alienating the sense of today. No transporting to 'what if.' This is not the stereotype of science fiction. It is, rather, Sci-Fi Realism."

"CHILDREN OF MEN is a theme-oriented film: the environment, immigration, fertility, hope. We don't have time for cautionary tales any more. We are witnessing a world that is collapsing. The acceleration of pace in the 21st century leads to a frantic attempt to cope.

Williams points out, "Futuristic film sets pose unusual challenges for the obvious reason: no one has been there yet. Therefore, one has to glean a vision from every source possible including current day news reports that then set the imagination moving into the future. A BBC Radio 4 piece on increased stages of global warming was such a piece."

"The map for our vision came from Alfonso," she continues. "I asked him for a *timeline of events* which helped us to unravel the political situations in our *world*. From the politics we were able to determine the direction of the state of society and thereby the look of the country. Alfonso also said that he wanted every frame to have a meaning, a reason, to have some story points reflected within it."

The lead character, *Theo* [Clive Owen], works for the *Ministry of Energy*. The emptiness of his office leads the visual journey for the film's governing point of view. In 2027 most of the world's energy resources have been used up and infertility has caused a dwindling population. The gap between those in power and those without is epically huge and symbolic of current times. "A diminished population, reduced workforce and crumbling city infra-structure all had to be communicated visually," said Williams. Evidence of the scarcity of phones and



electricity had to be conveyed. Williams had to find lighting fixtures that could act as subtle stage lighting in order to simulate natural light, and thus indicate the reality of rationed energy.

"The situation had to be reflected in every detail, as the story is truly told not just by the characters and dialogue, but clearly by the surrealistic setting," notes Williams.

The detailing included a room papered in newspapers, ceiling as well as walls. This required Williams to come up with newspapers "from that time," which meant "relevant" articles written and set as in print, then incorporated with photos and graphics into what would seem actual newspapers of the day.

### Bexhill

"The refugee camp was a result of a collage of references from refugee camps and Guantanamos around the world.

Beirut, Chernobyl, Northern Ireland," Cuaron revealed. "My collaborators collected so many iconographic references from media and the news."

"Bexhill was a logistical nightmare," recalls Williams. "We created it on streets in Woolwich, England, and 4 other locations in other parts of England." 400 collapsible shanties had to be crafted using "found" materials and objects, leantos with corrugated metal roofs. The streets had to be littered with the refuse of hundreds of disparate people. In Bexhill, as in many real refugee camps, gangs roam and rule. Refugees seek shelter, both physical and emotional, and struggle to meet basic needs with ever-decreasing supplies. A futility is conveyed physically, evidence everywhere of the absence of children, the absence of hope.

The message is complete. Williams notes, "One of the London papers headlined their review of the film 'God Save Us From Bexhill.'"

### Jasper's House

Jasper's House, the country retreat of political cartoonist Jasper Palmer [Michael Caine] and his photojournalist wife proved to be perhaps the most grounding of the key sets. Caine wanted his 75-year-old "coolest-old-hippie in the world" to be fashioned on how John Lennon might have looked and lived, had he reached that age under these circumstances.

Williams decorated an older country house in the English woods with photographs and political cartoons produced by famed British political cartoonist Steve Bell, consultant to the film. A montage of cartoons and photographs helped set the overtone of the film, bringing the past toward this dismal future, visible in tracking shots. One has to look carefully to see the imagery, but the point is well taken and Williams design is truly inspired. It is perhaps the only set that allows the viewer a bit of a respite from the onslaught of visions of destruction. Momentarily, one can feel a bit relaxed in a film that otherwise keeps the viewer on alert throughout.

### **Quietus Box**

No film could be completed without at least one particularly memorable set or prop. In CHILDREN OF MEN that would be the *Quietus Box*, a government-issued euthanasia kit sent through the mail by the futuristic government to all people who reach "old" age. (The specific age was not revealed). Eliminating the elderly gives the government another way to save on health care, services and diminishing resources.

Because the *Quietus Box's* presence in the film is clearly disturbing, for a touch of levity Williams' crew wrote directions inside for its use. These would never be seen on camera. The box became gallows humor for the crew amid sets depicting an infertile future in which a total systems crash has eliminated all that has been comfortable and operable in our lifetime.

--Sue Steinberg and SD staff





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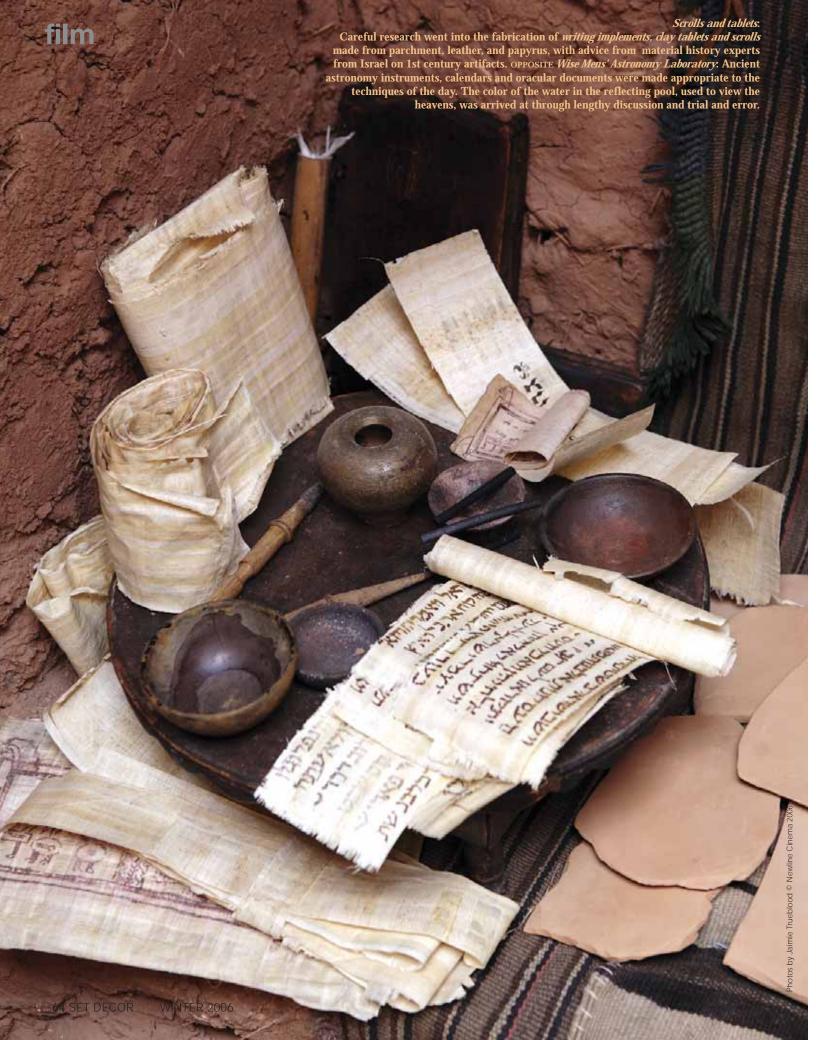


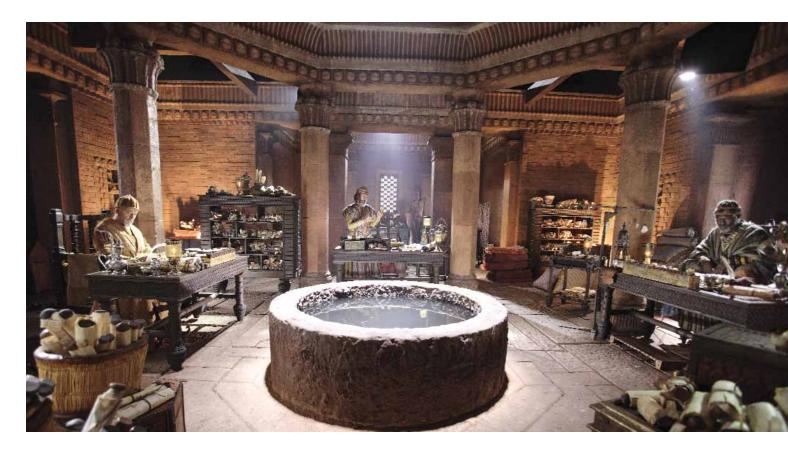


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Set Decorator Alessandra Querzola SDSA Production Designer Stefano Maria Ortolani New Line Cinema

### the nativity story

THE NATIVITY STORY provided the opportunity, albeit with great complexity in the production process, for the design team to excavate historic facts yet contrive a look specifically suited to this version of the familiar tale.

The point of view is largely through the eyes of *Mary*, portrayed as a 16-year-old girl thrust abruptly into marriage and adulthood. Director Catherine Hardwicke's goal was to achieve "epic intimacy" from an accessible, grounded, personal perspective. Set Decorator Alessandra Querzola SDSA approached her assignment, from research to design to fabrication to assemblage, with a sense of creating an exceedingly tactile surround for the performers.

Twenty-three countries were represented in the international cast and crew assembled by New Line Cinema for

THE NATIVITY STORY. Los Angeles based Director Hardwicke, a former production designer headed the creative team with a largely Italian art department, notably Set Decorator Querzola and Production Designer Stefano Maria Ortolani, along with a phalanx of Italian and Moroccan artisans. Seven languages were regularly spoken on set. Location filming on the project was split between Matera, Italy and Ourzazate, Morocco, with 5 weeks spent shooting in each.

"I was surprised to see how much the set decorator was responsible for in Italy," said Hardwicke. "Alessandra built in lots of elements, and her carpenters made things. She was in charge of the props. The [production] designer deferred to her about all the details."

Based in Rome, Querzola often travels to work in Morocco,



Nazareth village kitchen.

House interiors were purposely made small and low, with thick walls and traditional techniques, with the exception of the bread oven, fashioned after a reference from Syria, made from plaster to look like rock.

as she did in this case, and uses resources all over Europe to complete her designs. Querzola's background was in the Italian opera and theater. She studied at the Academia de Bellas Artes in Rome and then studied "scenographia," set design, in Venice. She worked her way up from washing socks and making props at various opera houses in Italy, such as at the legendary La Fenice in Venice. During the 1980s Querzola worked in Italian TV, in the 1990s took a trip around the world, learned English and started working with US productions coming to shoot all or part of their projects in Europe.

The artisanal design and manufacturing work for THE NATIVITY STORY was informed by Querzola's early experience backstage at the opera. An enormous number of objects had to be crafted, some in great quantity, by artisans both in Italy and Morocco. She credits Property Master Antonio Fraulo's contributions. As is the custom in Europe, Fraulo worked very closely together with the Set Decoration department to achieve the look. "You lose three-quarters of the detail in the movie, but it's all atmosphere and subliminal," said Querzola.

### RURAL SIMPLICITY AND URBAN RICHNESS

There were 2 main visual themes in the film. The 1st century BC villages of Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Elizabeth's Village are composed of grey and brown colors of stone and wood They stand in contrast to the richer Oriental palate of Herod's Court,

the Jerusalem Temple, the Wise Men's Study and several Street and Desert Market sets.

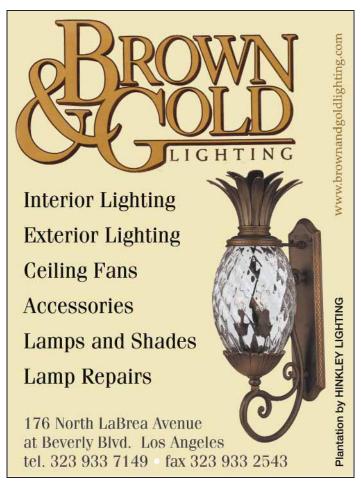
### SMALL ROOMS, LOW CEILINGS, REAL ROCKS

Nazareth, Mary's hometown, was built for the film in the countryside outside of the historic limestone cave town of Matera, Italy, where part of PASSION OF THE CHRIST was shot in 2005, as was Pier Paolo Pasolini's Oscar@ nominated THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW IN 1963. "This is a fantastic location, with protected olive groves and an environment with all the right colors for THE NATIVITY STORY," said Querzola. "Stefano did a fantastic job on the town, the atmosphere, the scale." Local artisans were thrilled that another "Bible epic" was coming to town- hoping to provide more of the same objects needed previously. But NATIVITY had a different look, so Querzola had to gently redirect them to see things anew.

A 3-week immersion experience for the actors in the *Nazareth Village* set provided opportunities to practice with period tools, bake bread, work with the animals, learn leatherworking, and generally live in 1st century conditions. It also required Ortolani, Querzola, and Fraulo to "have the set ready 3 weeks in advance on an already incredibly tight schedule," remembers Hardwicke. "But for a teenager like

Continued on page 92









### For your Consideration



Set Decorator **Dena Roth SDSA**Production Designer **Joseph Garrity**Warner Bros Independent

mbarking on a Christopher Guest movie is a film journey like no other. His films explore how a person's focus can become locked into a very narrow tunnel and how that concentration colors his or her world and perspectives. The paths taken to convey this essentially human quality are as unique as the films themselves.

"They are character studies done with the utmost respect," says FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION Set Decorator Dena Roth SDSA, who has worked with Guest on his last three films. "I think that's what makes his movies so good. Even with their neuroses, the characters are lovable. And they're so well drawn. Chris is very specific at the beginning of a movie that 'This is not about making jokes.' It's funny because humanity is funny, and to be celebrated."

Production Designer Joe Garrity, veteran of innumerable Guest films, describes the mandate for art direction and set decoration, "We are not the humor. We are the reality. You have to believe these people. You have to think it's real. Chris is always concerned with 'What is the reality?'"

Roth agrees, "Everything is always supposed to be very straight-forward, very real. Some of the characters have quirks that can be visually conveyed. Catherine O'Hara's character, for example, is a cat fanatic. So there's a sort of obsessive cat layer which



*Callie Webb* [Parker Posey] watches the award nomination ceremony hoping to hear her name announced for her part in *Home for Purim*, the movie-within-a-movie in the real film FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

is funny because it's funny. But Chris's whole take is that that is real."

The realism of the sets gives a secure base for the actors' improvisation.

There were 26 pages of script about the making of a film and how the award buzz affects everyone on the production. Six pages were dialogue specific for the "movie-within-themovie." Of the rest, Roth says, "It's entirely improvisational. There are plot points, but the script is mostly backstory. This script was such a great read. After having been in the business 20 years, you recognize many of the personalities being described."

"Chris is very, very good about letting actors find the totality of their own character," she continues. "So I'll meet with each one at least once early on to get their view of the character. The actor will always have done a lot of prep work and developed a personal history. Some of this can be reflected in the set and some of it is just really interesting and incredibly funny. I'll then compile some images and concepts and bring them to Chris and Joe. The colors and specifics come from Joe, but Chris certainly has a sense of the feeling of a place."

Garrity points out, "The actors make great use of what we have put around them, some of which they actually talk about and some of which they use to deepen their sense of the character. Some they play right off of, like that flower arrangement in A MIGHTY WIND. Dena just brought in great flowers for the lobby not knowing that Bob Balaban was going to go off on it in the memorable way he did."

Providing the reality base became somewhat surreal when pulling together sets for the movie-within-the-movie, *Home for Purim.* 

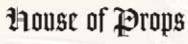
Doing the basic set was a delight for Roth, "There's nothing more fun than doing a period house. This was a 1940s Southern Jewish family." From choosing wallpaper, to finding linens and era-appropriate accessories including hairnets to sit on the dressing table, and even having to create a complete waterfall-Deco bedroom set from mismatched pieces, Roth was in her element.

However, the lines began to blur when dealing with aspects of filmmaking like craft service. A testament to accuracy, the crew kept grazing from the craft service table Roth had set up for the *Film Stage* set for the movie-making of *Home for Purim*.

In keeping track of everything and everyone, Roth says, "The movie-within-the movie would be confusing because of the actor's names, the character's names, the character's character's names." Imagine creating the *make-up trailer* for one of the character's characters, needing to have elements for both characters present and interfaced.

There were also multiple sets for the circuit of *entertainment* shows that awards season brings, the *homes* for each of the characters playing characters and a pre-awards bash.

Despite the low budget and having to pull off miracles regularly, Roth says, "When I know there's a Chris Guest film coming up, that's all I want to do. Because it's highly creative and because there is this group of incredibly talented people who are also so nice to work with."



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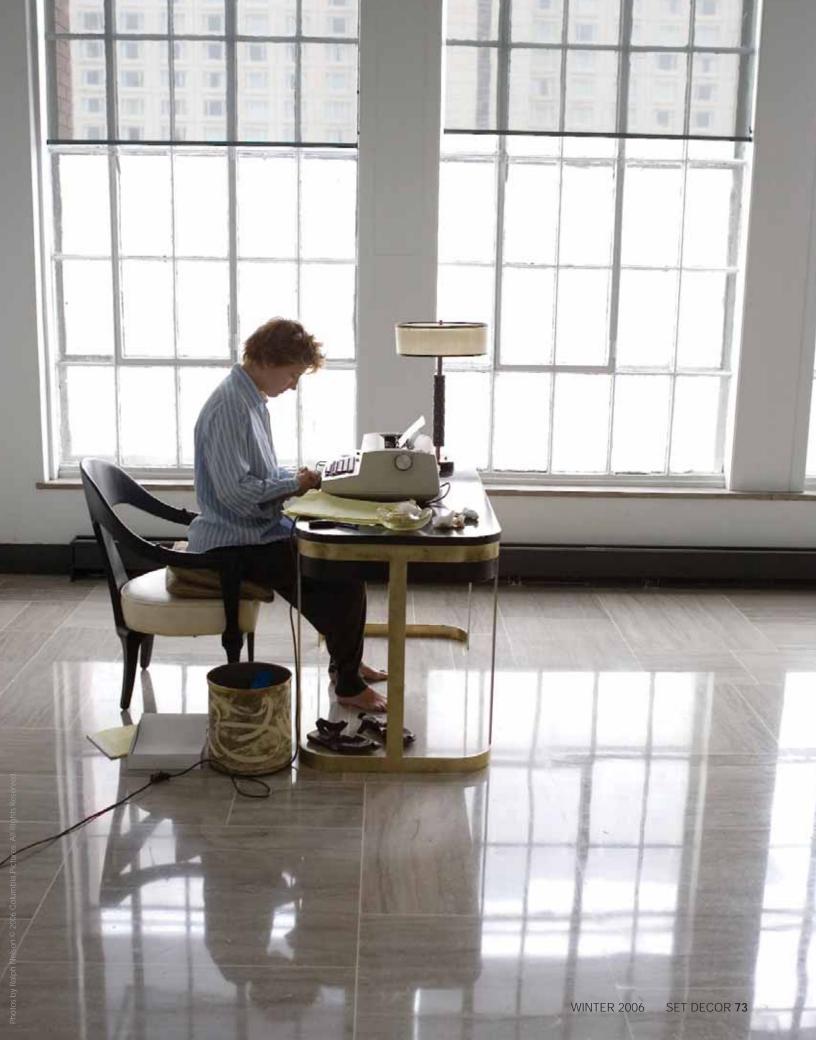
# film



# STRANGER THAN FICTION

Set Decorator Ford Wheeler Production Designer Kevin Thompson Columbia Pictures Walking the line between comic fable and stark reality, every set for the quirky film STRANGER THAN FICTION offers the emphatic revelation of each main character. Because of the narrative style and minimalist dialogue, this in-depth visual information becomes an essential quality of the film, pulling the audience in despite its highly stylized look and theme.

As the film's narrator advises, "We must remember that all these things, the nuances, the anomalies, the subtleties which



# film

we assume only accessorize our days, are in fact here for a much larger and nobler cause."

The narrator is the voice of *Karen "Kay" Eiffel*, a celebrated novelist, who has been working for 10 years on what may be her best book. This obsessive, blocked and somewhat self-destructive writer is reading aloud excerpts as she types them on a battered IBM Selectric, trying to inspire the perfect ending.

Unknown to her, *Harold Crick*, her main character, is an actual person who begins to hear her voice in his head, reading the script of his life. The fact that all of her books end with the death of the main character adds the key twists to the tale.

The personalities of the characters are definitively drawn the moment we see their surroundings: IRS auditor Harold Crick's dull, lifeless, perfectly ordered apartment and grid-like office and Kay Eiffel's minimalist but soulful workspace. Literary theorist Professor Jules Hilbert's [Dustin Hoffman] university office and the bakery owned by free-spirited Ana Pascal [Maggie Gyllenhaal] provide the yin to Eiffel and Crick's yang. While Crick's environs are colorless and Eiffel's black and white, the professor's richly earth-toned office and wall of books speaks volumes and Ana's bakery and home are filled with color and the stuff of life.

# Harold Crick

Harold Crick's world has symmetry, but it is a bland nothingness. Set Decorator Ford Wheeler describes, "Harold's life was regimented, specific and without unexpected or carefree moments. So everything about his space was a dullish color, simple design, nothing decorative."

Harold's workspace is rectilinear. The Escheresque IRS Archives, seemingly a simple repetition of endless shelved boxes, proved to be a fittingly nightmarish creation. Wheeler couldn't simply raid all the local office supply stores, nor even order from them. "Everything had to be very specific. It turned out to be very difficult to find a company that was willing to produce plain white filing boxes. The IRS Office required 86 identical work stations set on 6000 square feet of grey carpeting."

# Karen "Kay" Eiffel

"The hardest was Karen Eiffel's character," says Kevin Thompson. "You know she's successful. It would be so clichéd to do any sort of loft. But then we found this three-room white-walled marble-floored huge-windowed space! It was something that hit both Director Marc Forester and myself as, 'This is like a blank page.' This would be the kind of place where she would go to sit and write."

Wheeler notes, "The location had been one of the first industrial buildings in Chicago and had this classical reception area on the top floor. The floor was a beautiful grey marble. We cleaned it up and polished it, but not to that over-gleaming they often do with floors. We wanted it to look soft and subtle and gorgeous, not shiny and hard. It was so beautiful, we didn't need any carpeting."

This set the stage for a unique form of minimalist decoration using classic vintage pieces. With so few elements in each room, every piece had to be exceptional. There is an

|Will Ferre|| & Maggie Gyllenhaa| Harold & Ana



Italian high-backed designer chair from the 1940s with the original upholstery. Next to it sits an unusual table, which on closer inspection is a fireplace cooking implement, part andiron, part brazier.

Kay has two desks. The reception desk cum thinking desk has a French wrought iron base with brass detailing and a stone top specially cut for the film. Wheeler points out, "Since she stands on the desk, it couldn't have too slippery a surface, nor so shiny that it would be ruined when she steps on it. The typing desk was a rental, a vintage desk. Most of the things that we featured in the place were brass and black. It was very hard to find anything that looked just right—not too designery, but also not ordinary. At the last minute, I found a fantastic low 1940s chair with Chinese embossed leather. The leather padded lamp I discovered at a junk store." Keeping with the warmth of brass versus chrome, Wheeler had a contemporary ergonomic chair brass-plated for the main desk.



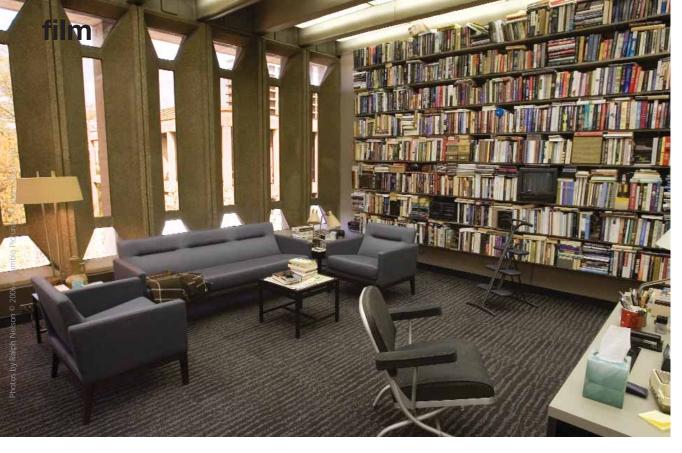
"The space was clean and spare but it needed to have some personality to it," says Wheeler. "The coat rack seemed a perfect piece. They call it 'fer noir' which means 'black iron.' It was tall, sculptural, interesting."

# Ana Pascale

"Ana introduced the colors and the curves, the sort of fairytale, whimsical aspect of life," says Thompson. Ana is vivacious, rebellious and compelling; a tax protester who donates the amount of her taxes to charity rather than pay the *IRS*.

The simple earthy exterior of the *Anarchist Bakery* could be misleading, but the large windows reveal the joyful, bohemian interior. A collection of patterned glass plates fills a picture window, prisming the light streaming in. Wheeler gathered the plates as he shopped for other furnishings, had holes drilled and them hung them like a glass curtian. He also built a





Professor Jules Hilbert (Dustin Hoffman)

collection of ice cream scoops, which he had mounted above the large round window.

The *bakery* offered the most fun for Wheeler. "I had incredible cookies made, designed with anarchistic symbols and had the chairs covered with a fantastic velvet in the most gorgeous, vibrant colors." Whimsical lamps and shades added another layer of personality.

Ana's House carries on the bohemian themes, the earth goddess offering warmth and color to the film. Unusual high-backed Italian chairs ring a French outdoor table. The sofa was a flea market find that Wheeler had upholstered in a unique bold floral fabric.

# Professor Jules Hilbert

"The Brutalist concrete, university look was *Hilbert's world*," says Thompson. "We never see him at home." The literary theorist's office is a counterpoint to the novelist's. While *Eiffel's* furnishings seem sparse yet carefully chosen and placed, just as she does with words, *Hilbert's* is as filled with books as his mind is with theories. Both have a love of words; they just have different ways of expressing it.

"The thing that really defined *Hilbert* was the giant bookcase which was actually a wall of books," says Wheeler.

The hundreds of books represent different paths one can take in life. *Hilbert* tells *Crick* he has to determine if his life story is a comedy or a tragedy.

Hoffman, who plays *Hilbert*, says, "I think if you have to define life, you might say that it's a very serious comedy. And that's what this film is all about." ■









# The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause

Set Decorator **Don Diers SDSA**Production Designer **Richard Holland**Walt **Disney Studio** 

Set Decorator Don Diers SDSA and Production Designer Richard Holland aspired to make THE SANTA CLAUSE 3: THE ESCAPE CLAUSE "the best-looking Santa film ever" by giving it an exciting, fresh look, filled with layers of magic.

In order to establish a sense of history and a definitive style, they took cues from the previous films, put more depth and detail into the theme and back-story, and created what Diers refers to as *North Pole Nouveau*. Wood, tin and cloth materials were used in a wide range of non-garish colors, embellished with crystals, glitter and fun designs.

Diers introduced more playfulness, "It was all a little sillier, with lots of *hoopdy-doo.*" [A term Diers applies to the swirly ornamentation and minute detailing of *North Pole Nouveau.*]



With gusto and aplomb, matching that of the most dedicated of elves, Diers, Holland and their teams delved into all aspects of the project. Diers explains, "My campaign with the village was to "go inside," to reveal the interiors a little more, and to add street dressing. We wanted to look into the windows and see more than blank walls behind the characters peeking out."

# Four times one

Dealing with a sequel required matching the previous versions and then stepping beyond. The enhancement stretched into four different aspects of the world of *Santa* [Tim Allen]. Two were time-sequential -- the wondrous, whimsical *pre-Christmas* and

Christmas. These tumble into comical chaos when Santa's world is first disguised as "Canada" for some unsuspecting visitors and then is taken over and commercialized by the evil Jack Frost [Martin Short].

"The Workshop reveals a definite passage of time, an acceleration of activity by the elves that shows that we're getting closer to Christmas," Diers points out. "For the camouflaging redress into a small Canadian village, we see the elves disguising elements and hanging punny signs (Canadian Bacon Exchange) over the Elfburg signs."

Frost sabotages Santa's world by turning The Workshop into a theme park, the North Pole Resort. Says Diers, "This was







OPPOSITE *Toy Factory*. There were a number of times that the set decoration and design actually dictated the set action of the actors, specific things that the *elves* would be doing to build the toys in the workshop.

ABOVE *The Village* was decorated in *North Pole Nouveau*, a style created by Set Decorator Don Diers SDSA & Production Designer Richard Holland

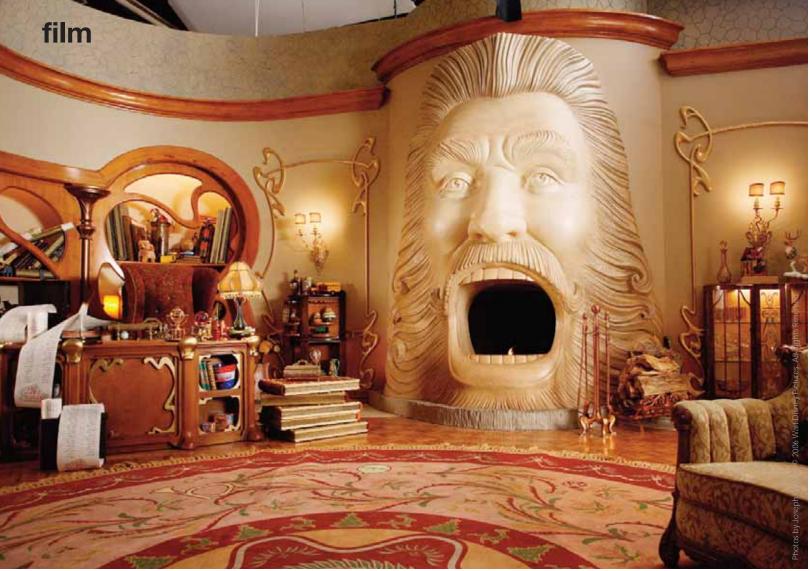
a visual challenge because the viewer has to understand that we're still in *The Workshop*, but it's a rip on the original. Kids now pay to come and create their toys! Frost's take on the season has discarded the soul, family and magic of Christmas."

## **Production**

The movie was very schedule-driven, with specific needs. Many of the actors were children who could only work a certain number of hours per day. For 81 out of 83 scenes Tim Allen had to be in time-consuming *Santa* make-up. To add to the pressure, ironically the village set was scheduled to be demolished during the actual Christmas holiday!

There was a highly interactive relationship between the set decoration and props teams dealing with not only the look of the film but also the process of how the movie had to function. Diers, Propmaster Emily Ferry and Holland worked very closely to make it all come together.

Holland notes, "On an Art Department movie, you are challenged and pushed into directions that open up whole new worlds. Having a great team of talented people sharing that adventure only made it a better place to go to. It's important to be able to have the communication that is needed with the set decorator. The collaboration is vital, and it's essential that we share a vision that will not only complement but enhance the



Santa's House custom-made in North Pole Nouveau

set in ways that you never thought of. One of the great gifts about working with Don is his terrific sense of style and detail."

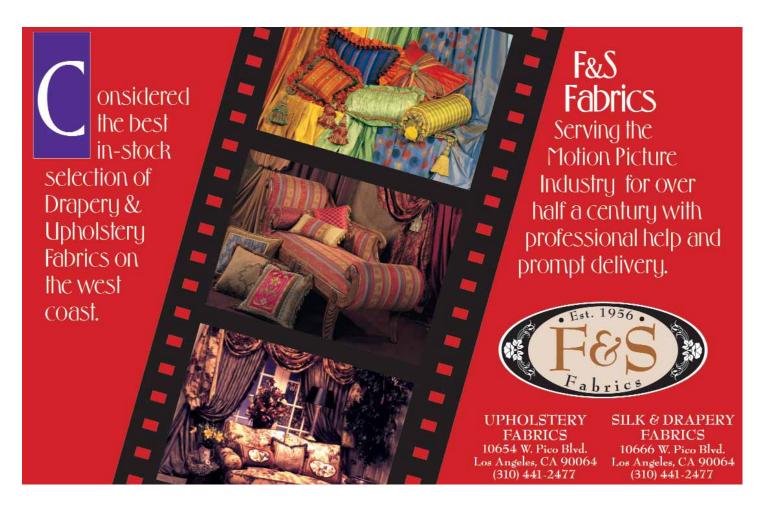
# Kluge

"There's a word I like to use called "kluge," remarks Diers. "It involves taking small elements that may or not match and putting them together to develop a creative whole with more bells and whistles. Kluge flavors everything I decorate and works well with a collective sense of humor. In machinery, in gags, in architecture, in production design, we used kinetic kluge to do a sort of Victorian inventing process that came up somewhere between a fairy tale and Jules Verne."

Diers continues, "I take a certain risk when I'm decorating. I believe that things are going to work out. And I've found the inspiration I needed in the most unlikely places. Creativity is making something happen out of chaos. I've learned to trust the chaos enough to believe that it's part of the creative process."

-- Kate Sheeley SDSA





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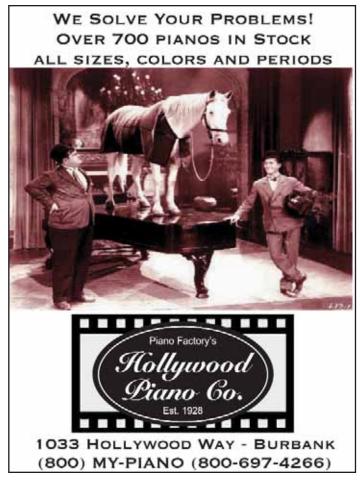
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"Don't ever let somebody tell you you can't do something ... you want something, go get it. Period."

-Chris Gardner, portrayed by Will Smith

Powerful words, in tune with the spirit with which Lauri Gaffin SDSA and her set decorating department embraced the task of restoring parts of the cities of San Francisco and Oakland to the year 1981 for the film THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS.

Settings numbered over 100 in this fast-paced film and included pre-internet stockbroker's offices, hospitals, BART stations, a Chinatown day care center, street scenes, homes, hotels and a homeless shelter, all set 25 years ago.

Gaffin gives SET DECOR her perspective about working on this true story of a single father who refused to let homelessness harm his child, or stand in the way of pursuing The American Dream for both of them.

Set Decorator Lauri Gaffin SDSA Production Designer J Michael Riva

# the PURSUIT HAPPINESS

Setting our story in 1981 proved to be an interesting conundrum for our set decorating department because objects from that era are not yet considered collectible, yet they are no longer in general circulation. It was a mystery—where had all that stuff gone?

Gang Boss John Micheletos, Shopper Jody Weisenfeld and their San Francisco crew were wonderfully resourceful in scouring the city for period set dressing. SD Department Coordinator Amina Dieye searched endlessly, particularly online, for everything from unusual period office items (time stamps and teletype machines) to everyday objects whose labels had changed considerably since 1981 (magazines, board games, soda bottles and cereal boxes). Even a seemingly ordinary object like





# film



ABOVE Mrs Chu's Kitchen

RIGHT Chris Gardner [Will Smith] and his son Christopher [Jaden Christopher Syre Smith]

a 1981 parking meter had to be resurrected from the San Francisco municipal morgue, then sent down to the Disney Staff Shop to be reproduced in quantity. We traveled with 60 of our period *meters* for every imaginable street scene.

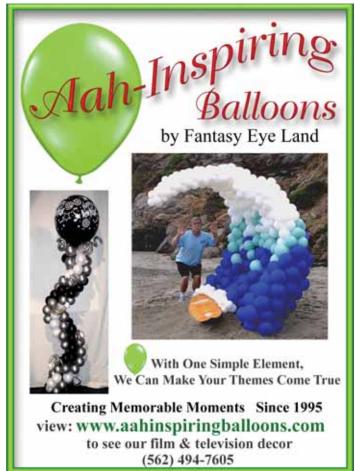
The *Dean Witter Offices* set was a challenge because the equipment used in 1981 was almost impossible to find. After searching for months, we tracked down one authentic Quotron machine, an important informational tool used by stock brokers to view real time market data. In order to have a *Quotron* on every *stock trader's desk*, as well as enable the playback of stock quotes, we made a mold of our one real machine and created dozens of "*Quotrons*" that housed contemporary monitors.

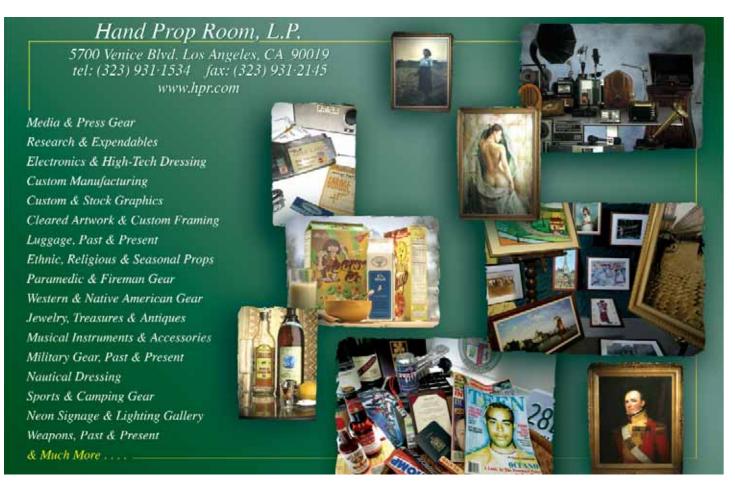
This set was also unusual because the company chose to shoot in a real working high-rise office building in the center of downtown San Francisco. The space afforded spectacular 360 degree views of the city that heightened the drama in every scene, but also created a special logistical challenge to dressing the sets. Lead Anthony Carlino ran both a day and a night swing crew to avoid the financial district's extraordinary parking restrictions and elevator complications.

The day we shot at San Francisco's Glide Shelter brought all of us very close to the truth of Chris Gardner's story. Broken dreams and enduring hope, the struggle of these homeless people to re-enter society, was a heartening lesson for everyone on the crew.

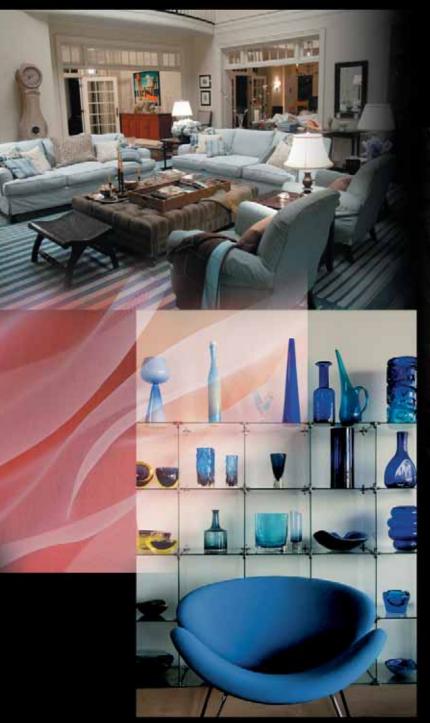
We loved shooting in San Francisco. The people were friendly, the resources were good and the food was fabulous! Director Gabriele Muccino was a pleasure to work with. Will Smith and his son Jaden embodied the story of Chris Gardner with great passion and commitment. It was a privilege to work on such a meaningful, honest story.







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# RED CARPET GALA

For People who Make Movies and People who Watch Them

THE event of the New Year will be the RED CARPET GALA For People who Make Movies and People who Watch Them to be held at the historic Alex Theatre during the Academy Awards® presentation on February 25th. Attendees will watch the televised program and arrivals on the large screen and multiple courtyard monitors while celebrating the Oscars® in style. See page 2 of this issue or visit the SDSA website www.setdecorators.org.

# Day with Set Decorators

Day with Set Decorators, the SDSA's signature learning experience for students and behind-the-scenes fans, begins its 2007 season on Saturday, January 20 with set visits to television shows filmed on the Warner Bros backlot. Set decorators will give tours of their work on the hit series ER, TWO AND A HALF MEN and THE CLASS. Attendees will explore the vast and historic furnishings realm of the Warner Bros Property Department.

The autumnal Day with Set Decorators was held at Raleigh Studios Manhattan Beach, touring the sets of MEDIUM, THE OC and BOSTON LEGAL. Set decorator docents shared anecdotes, tips and advice while hosting the set visits.

Day with Set Decorators is always a sellout event, so reserve early! Information and reservations: www.setdecorators.org.

# SDSA Toy Drive

Many Los Angeles area children received beautiful toys this holiday season through the generosity of SDSA members and friends. Toys were collected at boxes placed at host business members Hollywood Studio Gallery, Lennie Marvin, Ob\*Jects, Omega Cinema Props, Props Services West and Universal Studios Prophouse, then delivered to the Hollywood Fire Station for their annual Spark of Love campaign. This is the second year that the SDSA has participated in the campaign organized through SDSA Community Outreach.



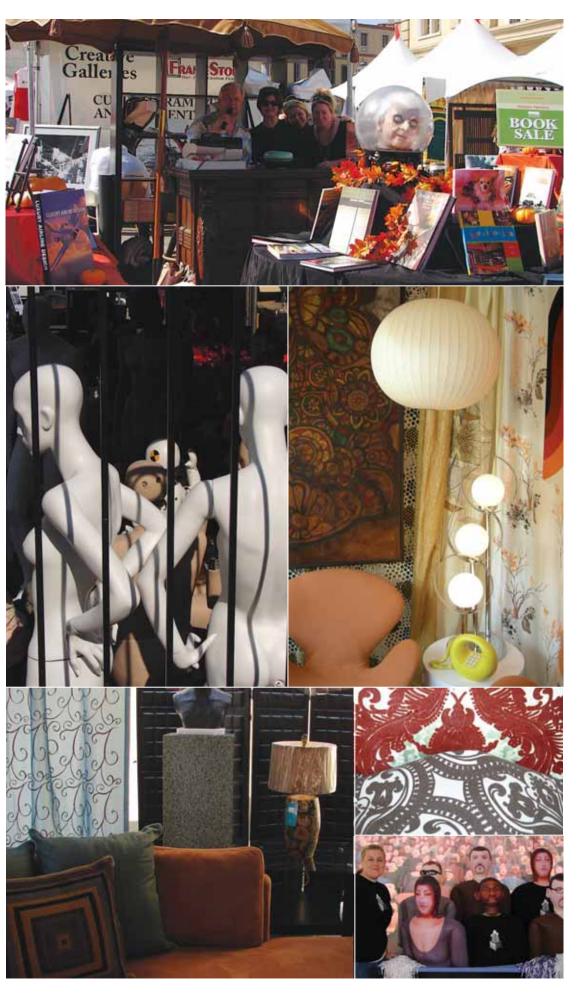
# MARKETPLACE 2006

MarketPlace, the festive annual SDSA expo, was once again a hit, returning this year to Universal Studios Backlot. The streets surrounding and leading to Spartacus Square were populated by tent after colorful tent of SDSA displaying their myriad of goods and services for the Motion Picture, Television, Theatrical and Event Industries.

The day was graced with blue October skies, warm sunshine, relaxed reunions of networking pros, the laughter of their children, prizes, live music, food and drink, and a congenial atmosphere. These photos give but a taste of the real thing. See you next year!



Photo's by: Alan Burg, Daryn-Reid Goodall and John Marin



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# **CONGRATULATIONS**



Congratulations to all of the recipients and nominees for the 2006 Emmys® for Outstanding Art Direction.

LEFT Richard C Walker SDSA immediately after receiving his Emmy®. The award went to Walker and Production Designer Stephan Olson for the pilot of *HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER*.

The SDSA Decorators Annual Emmys® party honoring all those nominated for Outstanding Art Direction in Television [Set Decorators, Production Designers and Art Directors] was held at Lawrence of La Brea August 17, just before the awards event. Architectural Digest, the SDSA and the Art Director's Guild feted the honorees as well.



# nativity story

Continued from page 66

Keisha Castle-Hughes (*Mary*), who is so very modern, it was vital to squat on the floor and eat the meals with her hands."

In the preproduction phase, Querzola and Ortolani worked closely with consultants from Israel's historic conservation of the actual town of Nazareth as well as an array of university experts in material history. A visual guidebook was developed. Colors of wood and shapes of objects were narrowed down. This defining process served to blend the efforts of many hands and eyes. This facilitated the search for rental elements from studios in Budapest, Prague, London, and Rome. The Moroccan craftsmen were better enabled to keep style and tone consistent among the many articles of furniture and handprops that were fabricated there.

# WISE MEN'S ASTRONOMY LABORATORY

"This set ended up being out of our imaginations, not of an exact period, or 'out of time,'" as Querzola puts it. She had 6 weeks to research imagery, design, gather and fabricate everything. Astronomical instruments were crafted by students at the University. Ancient astronomy calendars and oracular documents were made appropriate to the techniques of the day. Parchment and papyrus scrolls were prepared. Clay tablets and leather scrolls all were produced in quantity, and 84 the total were even more exactingly prepared for close-ups.

# TEXTURAL AUTHENTICITY, CULTURAL RESONANCE

About creating *street markets* of the ancient past, "I'm always scared about them," admitted Querzola. "It's hard to get them right. Signs are so hard. I'm obsessed—they always look awful if you are not careful." Marakkech provided a treasure trove of shopping resources. Colors came from textiles and pyramids of orange and yellow powdered spices.

Near the Moroccan town of Ourzazate, yet another 1st century village was erected by the design team: Mary's cousin Elizabeth's Village. This town was created by local artisans with loving care, since they are now living themselves in the homes created for the film. When Hardwicke came to review the layout of the main house, she asked for it to be made smaller than initially staked, to fit her research and concepts of the simple, impoverished life led by the Jews at that time. The builders almost wept, since it meant their eventual abode would be that much smaller.

Despite the potential chaos with many nationalities working together with different languages and working traditions, as well as nightmares in travel and transport through Customs to locations in different countries, the set decoration team of THE NATIVITY STORY managed to achieve visual consistency in the look of the stone, wood, and textile fabrications. The sets are warm, lived-in and offer a tactile reality for performers and audiences alike.

--Rosemary Brandenburg SDSA

# passages

# WAYNE CLINE

Longtime SDSA Business Member and friend Wayne Cline passed away in November, 2006. Owner of Fantasy Lights since 1985, he had worked there for many years prior, learning how to be the subtle support that this business demands. Cline was a genial man, who had assembled just the right resources and suppliers to meet set decorator style demands and last-minute requests. He was the sort who always made time for a friendly face, never seemed to be rushed, even in the midst of a bustling business.

Cline had also been involved in his late wife Anita Alberts' foundation Women Entrepreneurs of the World. Cline underwent heart surgery a few years ago, after selling the business to longtime associate Marc Trabulus. Wayne Cline will be missed by many of those whose lives he touched over the years.





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# resources

# FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS Pages 32-37

American Military Museum

Alpha Medical.

Earl Hayes Press

Flower Art

History for Hire

Independent Studio Service / ISS

Nights of Neon Inc Omega CP Four Premier Props

**RC Vintage** 

Renaudo Restoration Square Deal Plumbing

SRI

San Diego Military Museum

TR

Universal Drapery Universal Props Valley Molding

Warner Bros

Warner Bros Drapery

Warner Bros Furniture Restoration

# THE GOOD GERMAN Pages 38-45

The U-Bahn Tunnel:

Irrigation tubing as electrical lines: Furgeson Pipe.

Light fixtures from Berlin flea markets.

The Bugi Wugi:

Chairs & tables: Al's Studio Rentals

Barstools: Warner Bros.

Light fixtures: Omega Cinema Props

Bar dressing: Lennie Marvin, Omega CP2 and

Berlin flea markets.

Mueller's Office: (shot at the Huntington Library Museum).

Desk: Connoisseur Antiques, Los Angeles.

Additional furniture: Warner Bros.

Accessories: House of Props and Hand Prop Room.

Model ship: House of Props.

Lena's Apartment:

Table and chairs: Warner Bros.

Lace panels on the windows: Textile Artifacts.

Barracks:

Smalls: History for Hire. Bunks: Universal.

Pin-up photos: the Warner Bros Archives.

Exterior Streets:

Light fixtures: Warner Bros and Universal.

Rubble: AE Schmidt, LA area scrap yards and custom

manufacturing by sculptors & plaster dept.

Furniture destroyed in the rubble: St Vincent de Paul.

## THE DEPARTED Pages 48-55

Colin and Madolvn's Apartment:

Furniture: Room and Board, Pierre Deux, Les Pierres, Herman

Miller. Fabrics: Kravet.

Lighting: Pierre Deux, City Knickerbocker, George Kovacs,

Lighting by Gregory.

Accessories: books from The Strand

Wrought iron: Les Pierres, Smith and Hawken. Electronics: Macintosh, Pioneer, Bose. Linens: Bed Bath and Beyond, Peacock Alley Drapery and upholstery: Brent Porter Fabrications Flooring materials: M. Epstien's Son

Art: Winn Devon, The Poster Place, Harriet Zucker

Photography, Anne Silber, Ansel Adams Trust, Getty Images

Kitchen:

Major appliances: GE Profile. Appliances and gadgets:

Capresso, OXO, Simple Human, Cuisinart

Costello's Apartment and Bedroom:

Custom furniture: Classic Sofa, PlexiCraft, Ferra Designs Furniture: Ralph Lauren, A Room with A Vieux Antiques, Brodney Boston, Newel Art Galleries, Home Decorators,

O'Sullivan Antiques (NY), Antiques@80Charles

Fabrics: Ralph Lauren, Kravet, Libas, Ltd, Scalamandre

Leather: Kravet

Lighting: City Knickerbocker, Lighting by Gregory, Fine Art Lamps

Accessories: CDs, records: Looney Tunes Boston Books:The Strand, Irish writers collection: Ivan Katz,

Manhattan Rare Book

Electronics: Bed, Bath and Beyond

Art, sculpture and framing: Danica Derpic of D2Art, Old Print Shop, Universe Antiques, OJ Framing, One Hour Framing,

Brodney Boston, Troubetzkoy, Sky Frame

Floorcoverings: Montauk Carpet, Aronson's Floor Coverings,

Home Decorators

Drapery and upholstery: Brent Porter Fabrications, Raymond's

Custom Design

Massachusetts State Police Headquarters:

Office Furniture: Arenson Prop Centre, Tri-County Office

Furniture, Bergin Office Furniture, Two Jakes

Glass: Capitol Glass and Sash

Lighting and diffusers: City Knickerbocker

Floor coverings and window treatments: M Epstien's Son Computers: Dell, Telephone system: LCW Props, Tri-State

Telephone

24frame playback: Navesync Elevator panels: Monitor Controls

Art: Boston Herald, Kennedy Archive, Massachusetts State

Police, Corbis, Getty Images, Curtis Publishing

Miscellaneous:

Neon: Let There Be Neon, Manhattan Neon Sign, Neon Williams Construction equipment: Nappy Crane, Marr Scaffolding, NES Traffic Safety, Scaffold Services, Corp, Rudy V. Pompeo Surveillance equipment: Sirchie, Ace Video and Props, Lentini Communications, Custom items by Studio Art and Technology

Custom flags: Ace Banner and Flag

Restaurant equipment and furniture: M Kabram and Sons

Art Clearances: Wendy Cohen, Susan Perlman

# DÉJÀ VU Pages 56-59

The Lab and Time Machine:

Electronics, wire, cable, metal and plastic engineered shapes and parts, Mylar, kluge: Apex Electronics, C&H Sales, Norton Sales, Grainger, McMaster Carr, Allied Electronics, 3-Form engineered plastics, Dazian, Frye's, Graybar, IMS, Pacific Radio, Rubber Supply

Rack mounts and Components: LCW, Master Clock, ISS, Woody's, PVI. Coast Recording, Middle Atlantic Products, Tech Props. Rack Solutions

Computer screens: Playback Technologies, HP through Davie-Brown product placement, GE product placement, Apple Computers product placement

Screen mounting systems: Mounts and More, Humanscale

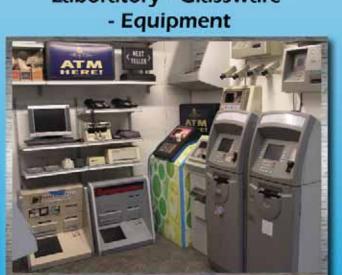


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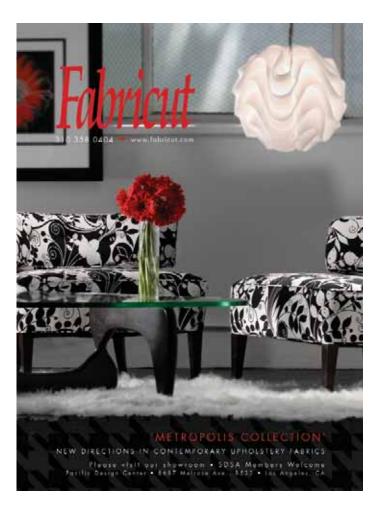


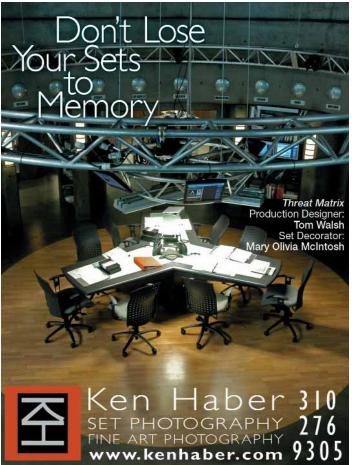
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# resources

# DÉJÀ VU Continued

Photography: Ken Haber Photography

Phones: Cisco systems, through Davie-Brown, product

Lighting: Graybar, F.I.R.E., Bulbtronics, The

L.E.D.Light.com

Graphics, labels: U-Line, Seton, Cinema Paper Rentals,

Lab Safety Supply

#### Claire's House:

Artwork: D2, Biscuit Props, Gallery Lakaye. Framing: HSG, UFramelt, HCA, Pinacoteca New Orleans: Peligro gallery, Linda Lesperance:

Fabric: American Folk and Fabric, Govinda's, Williams Sonoma Home, Warner Bros Drapery, Tribal Treasures,

Gallery Asha, Exotic Silks, Wild Things

Furniture, lamps, accessories; Disney Property, Warner Bros Property, Universal Studios Property, Practical Props,

local New Orleans dealers Plumbing fixtures; Square Deal

#### Rescue Scenes:

Emergency response tents: TVI corporation Medical equipment: Ferno (promo); Alpha Medical,

Premiere Props

Cases for portable electronics: Thermodyne; Warner Bros

Crime scene specialty: Lynn Peavey Body bags: Evident Crime Scene Products

# STRANGER THAN FICTION Pages 72-76

Karen "Kay" Eiffel's writing studio:

Blinds and shades: Hunter Douglas Harold Click's apartment & IRS office: Blinds and shades: Hunter Douglas

Carpeting: Shaw Carpeting Professor Jules Hilbert's office:

Couch and chairs: Brayton Interiors

# PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS Pages 84-86

#### Dean Witter Office:

Quotrons: manufactured by Hand Prop Room; original loaned by Reuters

Period phones and modems: Crank Call Antiques Time

Stamp machines: Widmer Time Recorder Motel: Televisions: Playback Technologies Inc Glide Shelter: Cots: American Military Museum

Editor's note: the SDSA Business members are easily accessed through the SDSA website: www.setdecorators.org

# CORRECTIONS

## Misspellings:

David Venezky, david@venezky.com: Artwork featured in Television Sourcing, WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU, Spring 2006

Eric Neldner, ericneldnerphoto.com: Photography featured in SDSA event coverage, Spring 2006

### Misrepresented:

The setting for the television show THE CLASS is Philadelphia, not Pittsburg as quoted in Summer 2006.

## Misattributed:

F&S Fabrics is the source for the fabric on the chaise Melinda Ritz SDSA originally had reupholstered for WILL & GRACE which has now become a set piece for THE CLASS, see Summer 2006.

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