An Exploration of Design

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CHAPTER 1

SCENIC DESIGN

PERICLES

Play Synopsis

William Shakespeare’s *Pericles* is first and foremost an adventure story, as well as a tale involving lies, purity, and faith. Shakespeare has thrown everything from swashbuckling pirates to the goddess Diana into this play. It is a whirlwind of action landing us in six different countries and two shipwrecks all guided by the lovable and ever knowledgeable narrator, Gower.

As the show begins, we find ourselves in the palace of Antiochus, King of Antioch. There are several heads on spikes around the room, all in various stages of decay. Gower tells us that Pericles is here to attempt to solve a riddle. If he solves the riddle, he will win the hand of the princess; failure will result in his head being removed from his shoulders. The riddle reveals to Pericles that the king and his daughter are involved in an incestuous relationship and he mentions to the king that some things are best kept a secret. The king tells him they will decide whether he may live or die after a couple of days. Pericles decides to run, thus beginning our hero’s life changing journey.
After arriving home in Tyre, Pericles decides he must travel awhile because Antiochus will be looking for him. He leaves his most trusted advisor to rule in his stead while he is on the run. Pericles takes to the seas hoping to avoid more conflict with Antioch.

He lands in Tarsus where the people are starving. He gives King Cleon provisions for his people and Cleon lets him stay. Word is received from Tyre that Antiochus has sent an assassin to Tyre and that he may be on his way to Tarsus. Pericles is once again out to sea in order to avoid conflict.

On the ocean there is a great storm that breaks up the ship and our hero is cast into the depths and tossed on the waves. He washes ashore in Pentapolis where he is greeted by three fishermen who agree to take him to see the good King Simonides. As fate would have it Simonides is holding a competition between knights for his daughters’ hand in marriage. Pericles catches her eye and he wins the favor of her father; this gains him a new wife and ally in the same day. Pericles stays in Pentapolis as long as possible and his wife, Thaisa, becomes pregnant. A letter comes from Tyre for Pericles. In it he reads of the death of his enemies, and that he has been away so long the people of Tyre will his crown his advisor the new king if he is not home within twelve months’ time. This news drives Pericles and his new wife back to the seas.

Another storm comes up from the depths and sends Thaisa into early labor. The deck hands believe Thaisa has died during childbirth. The cultural superstitions of the ships laborer’s call for the dead to be removed from the ship in order to calm the storm. With a hastily written letter Thaisa’s body is tossed from the ship into the sea.
The coffin washes up on the shores of Ephesus, where it is carried to the house of Cerimon. He instructs his men to open the coffin and he discovers Thaisa is alive and needs only be revived. When she wakes and understands what has happened, she asks to be taken to the temple of Diana to live out her days in celibacy.

Meanwhile, grief stricken from the loss of his wife and concerned for the health of his child, Pericles makes for Tarsus. There he leaves his daughter, Marina, in the hands of Cleon and his wife Dionyza. He says he will return for her when she is grown but fears she will not make the trip to Tyre as an infant. Cleon and Dionyza promise to take care of his daughter, after all in their time of need Pericles delivered them provisions.

Years pass and we land back in Tarsus where Marina has grown into a beautiful young woman. Dionyza, jealous Marina’s beauty is taking all the attention from her own daughter, orders Leonine to kill her. As Leonine is about to strike the killing blow, pirates attack them and take Marina for themselves.

The pirates take Marina to a brothel in Mytilene where she is sold. She is presented to the governor of the province, Lysimachus, as a virgin. She tells him her story and he is impressed with her innocence and purity. He gives her gold instead of taking her virginity and leaves. The brothel owners promise to ravish her so she will not scare away anymore customers. She gives up the gold she received from Lysimachus and convinces them that she can make just as much money teaching people how to read and write as she would as a prostitute.
Meanwhile, Pericles shows up in Tarsus to receive his daughter where Cleon tells him she has passed away. Pericles returns to his ship and in his grief declares his he will no longer cut his hair nor bathe and will let fortune drive the wheel of his ship.

Pericles’ ship hands take him to Mytilene where perhaps someone can help our poor hero get through his deep depression. Lysimachus says Marina will be the one to bring him out of his depression. She comes and speaks to Pericles who thinks this is yet another stab from the gods that this beauty should share the same name as his late daughter. Upon discovering it is his daughter he rejoices and changes into clean robes. He sleeps in Marina’s arms and has a vision of Diana who instructs him to go to her temple in Ephesus. At the Temple of Diana Pericles discovers his wife Thaisa, whom he thought dead all these years. The family is reunited.

Gower wraps the play up in a tight bow by reminding us that Antiochus and his daughter got the comeuppance they deserved. He also tells us that when Pericles found out about the treachery of Cleon and Dionyza, he had their palace burned to the ground.
Concept Statement

When I read *Pericles* for the first time, I was blown away by the quickness of the action. The narrator Gower is whisking us from place to place and shipwreck to shipwreck. I wanted to bring the sense of adventure, and the feeling of being tossed around by fate to the stage without having arduous scene changes that would detract from the speed of the story.

*Pericles* is being tossed around on a literal ocean and on the sea of his troubles. He gives himself up to fate, as we all feel we must when times of turmoil and loss are upon us. I wanted to bring the ocean into the ship and the ship into the ocean as much as possible, accomplishing a sense of everything being tied together in both a literal and figurative way. Bringing movement to an otherwise static environment was of utmost importance to me. Large curves intersecting and flowing over hard lines and shapes is what I imagined the space to feel like, reflecting in some way no matter the hardness of your will, you cannot control your fate.
Research

After the first meeting with the director and costume designer, we had decided to shoot for a Middle Eastern feel but needed to also be without specific location or time period. The director and I agreed the set could be theatrical but also needed to have quick scene changes as to not detract from the fast pace of the play.

I began my research looking at pictures and videos of literal waves. The colors and progression of the waves curving over and crashing down was immediately powerful to me. I wanted Pericles to feel tossed around by the ocean as he is tossed around by fate in the script and it became very clear to me that large curved shapes were going to serve in the exploration of this design. (Figure 1.1)

This led me to look at artwork and sculptures of waves as well as curved sculpture in general. I came across many beautiful glass sculptures that seem to have life though they are static. (Figure 1.2)

I expanded my research to old ships from different time periods in the Middle East as well as from other areas of the world. The major
thing I wanted to incorporate from ships was the balance they have with the ocean, they rely on the ocean to get them where they are going, yet the ocean can turn on them at any time. This reminded me of the balance Pericles gains when he gives himself over to the gods. Paintings of ships on the ocean became much more evocative to me then real ships. The images I was coming across had already captured the feeling I wanted to create with the set. This got my mind turning over and over the question; how could I bring a ship, on the ocean, to the stage? (Figure 1.3)

I also found many images of old distressed wooden docks in my search for large ships. The blue, green, and gray colors of decaying wood in combination with the fresh feeling colors of waves greatly informed my color pallet. These colors also reminded me of early Middle Eastern paintings. (Figure 1.4)
When you spend a lot of time looking at ships and docks you end up looking at old maps and compass roses as well. They are so much a part of each other’s world you cannot help being affected by their presence. I was most attracted to the distressed looking paper maps, they made me think of the use they had and the places they had been. I began imagining maps as an inseparable part of Pericles and his world. I was excited to try and incorporate them into the set. Perhaps as a backdrop or maybe even sails of a ship. (Figures 1.5, 1.6)

*Figure 1.5 – Three-dimensional map - Photo by: Aaditya Arora*

*Figure 1.6 – Classic map - Photo by: Ylanite Koppens*
Design Process

In our Design Studies class, we have four weeks to complete a design. I started this design as a class project knowing it would become a realized design in the coming semester. I began with some rough sketches and white model. (Figure 1.7 - 1.9 and Plates 1.1 - 1.2)

I explored many ways of intersecting a ship and an ocean. I knew I wanted it to reflect the immensity of the ocean and the curve of the waves, tying in the ship was becoming the challenge. Initially, everything I came up with was arbitrary and didn’t reflect the feeling I was striving for. Finally, the image of floorboards lifting and curling off the deck of a ship came to my mind. I had the spark I needed to move forward. Very quickly the boards became waves and I had something I could show the director. (Figure 1.10)
The director, Leslie Brott, and I did not have a lot of time to get together before the summer break was upon us. I had a job in Arkansas, and she had obligations in California. We briefly met to look at what I had come up with and she expressed her concerns about the set as well as some of her needs. She requested a door of some kind in order to mask some of the entrances, as well as to have a grand reveal for the ball scene. She also requested the set move down stage considerably in order to press some of the sword fights and action closer to the audience. I assured her we could make these adjustments and keep the overall shape of the set that I had come to love. I then took my set model and sketch book to my summer job in the Arkansas mountains. While there I spent my time off locked in a cabin, sketching and reconfiguring my model. As I tried to add doors to the set, they looked forced and obviously not a part of the original composition. I spoke with my advisor and he told me to find a way the doors fit into the composition and not approach them as just a set of doors. Through hours of
exploration I was able to pull the set down stage as well as designing a set of doors that added to the set and did not distract. I clustered the waves together in order to hide the structure of the doors and platforms. I did a sketch, a set of four renderings in photoshop and prepared for my next meeting with the director. (Figure 1.11-1.13 and Plate 1.3)

With the design and direction team all on the same page, I started drafting the show. During the drafting process I made a few changes to where large units would be placed because of limitations in the space. In the Morgan Theatre the fly system does not allow for units to fly all the way out because of limited space, so I had to be very precise with trim heights of flying units and masking. Upon delivery of drafting packet to the Technical Director there
were immediate concerns about labor as well as keeping the show in budget financially. After a couple meetings together, we only had to make minor cuts to scenery, as well as making some changes in construction material and build method. I was informed I needed to have a railing on the top deck of my set so I designed and drafted new doors with a railing that would tie into the set. (Figures 1.4 - 1.15 and Plates 1.4 -1.6)
Execution

The build process for this show was stressful for me because it was my design and I knew we had to adhere to the build schedule or the show would not be done on time. Early on there were members of the shop who thought the show was too big to be successful and that it was going to cause everyone undo stress. Through proper time management and encouragement of shop staff to rise to the challenge we were able to come together as a team and complete this show on time without anyone being asked to work outside their regular hours.

During the build process there were some mistakes in structural drafting and mistakes on the part of the carpenters building the units. This is understandable because we are in an educational environment and I think learning what not to do is a huge part of learning what to do. I believe the shop and studio should be a place where it is safe to fail, and no one should feel like they have been singled out. The large wave on stage right was one such occurrence, in the original drafting it curved from top to bottom but, it had a large flat spot in the middle. In the interest of time and money I okayed the result. I did take the time to pull the shop staff together and explained to them the mistake that was made and how it could have been prevented.

Adhering to the build schedule became a challenge for a week or so when it came time to start on the wave platforms. The platforms were structurally designed very differently, one by the Technical Director and one by the Assistant Technical Director. This became a black hole
for time because after we figured out how to build the first one, building the second one was like starting from scratch. (Figures 1.16 – 1.17)

With the help of the practicum class we cut thirty large cardboard boxes into strips of varying sizes. The plan was for the cardboard strips to look like wood curling off the waves as they went up. Keeping the students positive while cutting what feels like an endless amount of cardboard was the biggest challenge of this part of the process. (Figures 1.18 – 1.19)
I gave elevations and technique examples to my Paint Charge. With the help of the paint class and practicum class she was able to paint the set well, and on time. The floor was done by the Paint Charge and me, as well as help from a couple other students. The floor took a full day because of dry time in-between layers and the complexity of the compass rose. (Figure 1.20 - 1.22)

Because of budget restrictions we could not buy China silks for some movement pieces that were being choreographed for the show. I went into prop storage and looked through every bin of fabric we had down there and was able to find a few pieces of china silk that were bright red. With the help of Nancy Hills, I was able to strip and dye the fabric a nice blue color. I also learned how to surge the sides of fabric to avoid fraying during use.
The lighting team was great with their preparation of the lanterns for use in this show. I painted some color onto the interior glass of the lanterns to match my original inspiration. The Master Electrician and I then hung them together.

The install of the set went just as planned only a few minor hiccups during load in week. Because of where intelligent lighting instruments were hung, I had to cut some masking and switch around the order of my flying scenery. The wave platforms and wave tops were designed to be separate pieces so the tops would not shake when actors ran on them. This took a large chunk of our install time, but the plan put in place by the technical direction team worked quite well. The top of one of the waves was cut incorrectly and was two feet shorter than it should have been. I noticed this as soon as we stood it up, so I built an extension for the bottom of the wave structure the next day and covered the exposed framing in leftover cardboard. (Figures – 1.23-1.25)
During the tech process I had to make a huge compromise with the director. On the stage right side of the set I had purposefully left the structure of the stairs unmasked because it gave a nice skeletal look to them and balanced my overall composition. After the first tech the director told me she needed to have the stairs masked because actors were telegraphing their entrances and it was throwing them off track. I expressed my concerns of having a large piece of masking interrupt the lines of the set and she told me this was the hill she was going to die on. In the interest of moving forward I added the masking the next day. I understand that we are training actors and their education is important as well. However, I feel the overall picture would have been more effective without the masking being forced into it. The remainder of the tech process was remarkably smooth from a scenery standpoint. (Plates – 1.7-1.12)
Reflection

This design process was an exciting one for me. I had the opportunity to design a show that seldom gets produced and one I was not entirely familiar with before picking it up to begin. This is my favorite type of project to work on because I have no preconceived notions of what the play is supposed to be.

Brott was very open to hearing my ideas about the play and was very straight forward about what she wanted to accomplish as well. This process felt collaborative from the very first design meeting we had. No one became voiceless in the process of the design and execution of the set, costumes, lights, and projections. All were created with each other in mind.

I learned a lot about shape and texture through this process. Adding the cardboard to the tops of the waves and to the transitions from wave platform to wave top made a huge difference in depth, as well as achieving the look of boards curling away from the deck. The shapes of the waves flowing over the deck of the ship made for a nice overall composition and gave the set a kind of power.

The biggest take away I have from this project is knowing that I can have an initial idea, get some inspirations from other people and rework the same idea I had into something that works for everyone involved. I struggled against myself in reshaping my initial design to work for Brott. I almost changed the entire scope of my design out of frustration, but through determination I reworked, ripped up, and reshaped until I had a set that served everyone’s needs.
Plate 1.1 - Thumbnail sketch 3

Plate 1.2 - Thumbnail Sketch 4
Plate 1.3 - Photoshop rendering 2
Plate 1.4 - Ground plan
Plate 1.5 – Wave A drafting

NOTES:
- Ramps must be structural up to the 6 foot mark for movement of actors.
- Alcove sinks that can be made of a single frame and sheetboard and lean out to look like boards and add depth.
- Make nine pieces of cardboard and lean.

Plate 1.6 – Door drafting

NOTES:
- Detail on door can be made of stock molding.
- Doors are hung on double hinges and are able to swing forward and backward.
- Doors are able to pivot back underneath platform in order to make them "disappear."

Door handle example
NOT TO SCALE
Plate 1.8 – Pentapolis Knights
Plate 1.9 - Coffin goes overboard
Plate 1. In the Brothel...
Plate 1.11 – Pericles reunites with Marina
Plate 1.12 – Pericles reunites with Thaisa
CHAPTER 2

LIGHTING DESIGN

Anna Karenina

Play Synopsis

Anna Karenina is a novel by Leo Tolstoy, adapted for the stage by Helen Edmundson. The story follows two characters whose lives are inexplicably tied together. As audience members we hop back and forth from Anna’s story to Levin’s story. Many times, throughout the play the two main characters are speaking to one another but are in different locations; these moments are almost like journal entries but are also conversational. Anna and Levin become our guides through their conversations, leading us in and out of different scenes and locations. Edmundson has done an excellent job keeping a heavy dramatic story moving. The subject could become a very slow and boring crawl, but she has adapted it to move quickly and keep our brains wondering what comes next.

We begin with Anna, Levin, and a ‘dark figure’ on stage. Levin is watching as Anna is demanding the figure to show his face. As the dark figure leaves Levin approaches Anna. They acknowledge they do not understand why they are part of one another’s story. We learn that Levin is friends with Anna’s brother Stiva and has just visited him in Moscow. They briefly talk about how Stiva is having an affair and that his wife Dolly knows. Their conversation brings us into a short scene with Stiva and Dolly, showing part of the fight they had when Dolly found out
about the affair. Anna and Levin do not leave the stage during this and we transition back to them as the scene ends.

Levin tells Anna he can’t stand the city and is happy to live in the country. He speaks about the value of hard work and about working alongside the peasants on his estate. He then tells Anna that he proposed to Kitty but she said no. There is a short scene here showing his proposal.

As we return to Anna she is getting off a train in Moscow. At the train station she meets Count Vronsky, and when he touches her hand, we know she will see him again. She comments that this meeting was a bad omen as the train station melts away. There is a short scene between Levin and Anna where Levin laments the fact Kitty does not want to marry him and is instead going to marry Vronsky, a fact Anna was not aware of.

In the next scene we find Anna at Stiva and Dolly’s house in Moscow where she is trying to convince Dolly to forgive her brother. She runs into Kitty and the Count while she is there. She goes into a trance like state when she sees the count, which does not please Kitty in the slightest, and decides she will go to the ball to try and see him again. Anna and Vronsky dance at the ball and it is clear they are quite taken with each other. After the ball she questions her actions. Dolly reassures her she had done nothing wrong, but Levin tells her she needs to stop because things will go too far. Anna travels back to Petersburg to see her husband and son; unbeknownst to Anna, Vronsky has purchased a ticket so he can travel with her.

Anna goes home to her husband; they talk and have calculated, passionless sex. She tells Levin everything is fine and as normal. Levin is at his estate praising the spring and
lamenting the laziness of the peasants when Stiva stops by and tells him he is selling a large part of Dolly’s estate because he is in financial trouble. He also comments that Levin should not work like a peasant and should spend more time at the club. Levin also learns that Kitty is broken up about Vronskey not wanting to marry her. Anna tells Levin she cannot go anywhere without running into the Count, and vows to tell him to stop.

At Princess Betsy’s party Anna attempts to tell Vronskey to leave her alone but he convinces her that they should keep seeing each other. During their conversation Karenin interrupts them to offer Anna a ride home. She tells him she will be staying for dinner instead which makes Karenin suspicious of Anna and Vronskeys intentions with her.

When Anna returns home Karenin questions her about her actions with the Count. She tells him she does not want to talk about it and goes to bed. Vronskey sneaks into her room and they make love for the first time. Levin is disgusted with her actions and tells her so but she protests to him that she is in love with Vronskey.

At the race Anna is recounting how Vronskey rides his horse. During this Vronskey is riding Anna like she is the horse as the crowd watches. After they are finished, she tells him she is pregnant. In the same scene she tells Karenin she is Vronskey’s mistress and she loves him. Karenin tells her she will hear from him when he decides what actions he will take.

We shift over to Levin and Dolly at Dolly’s estate. It is early summer; we learn that Kitty is coming to stay the summer with her, a fact Levin is unsure how to feel about. He expresses his feelings about the way Kitty acted and Dolly tells him he is being a fool. We also learn that Dolly is in denial about Stiva’s continued cheating.
As we shift back to Anna, she is alone. She is lamenting her decisions and wondering what will happen. She tells Levin she is going to take her son and leave and not be with either one of the men. She receives a letter from Karenin telling her he is going to take her son away from her care if she continues her affair. Vronsky tells her she needs to leave her husband and get a divorce so they can be more public about their relationship. He gives up a position as an officer to stay with Anna. Karenin again tells Anna she must keep her affair a secret or he will kick her out.

We find Levin in the barn trying to convince the peasants to work the farm as a partnership; each of them would own a piece of the farm and get the profits from whatever was sold. The peasants will have nothing to do with his new ideas or his new machinery. As the act ends Levin’s brother Nikolai shows up, very sick and in need of help.

At the beginning of act two the muffled figure from the beginning of the play is dragging a burlap sack across the stage and when he stops Anna emerges from the sack and clings to the figure. He leaves her alone in the middle of the stage. Karenin and Vronsky each approach her in turn and walk away several times. The two men end up facing each other and we learn that Vronsky has come to visit Anna and did not know Karenin was going to be home. Vronsky and Anna talk for awhile about their unborn child and he then leaves.

A split scene occurs at this moment in the play. Anna and Karenin are fighting about her having an open affair when he told her to keep it a secret. At the same time Levin and Kitty are falling in love. Karenin tells Anna he is divorcing her, and their son will go to live at his sister’s house. The scene ends with Kitty agreeing to marry Levin while Dolly is begging Karenin to
forgive Anna. Karenin expresses the hate he has for her because of all the pain she has caused him.

Anna is brought on stage by the muffled figure. She has puerperal fever and is dying. Karenin and Vronsky are there together. Anna asks Karenin to forgive Vronsky. He agrees and tells Vronsky that, because of the miracle of forgiveness he has had a change of heart and will stand by his wife. As Anna recovers, she tells Karenin she would rather be with Vronsky. Vronsky and Anna make love and he tells her he will resign his commission and they will move to Italy. She agrees to leave her son behind.

Levin confesses to a priest and writes a letter to Kitty confessing everything he has ever done that he is ashamed of. She says she loves him, and it is all in the past and they are married. During the wedding Dolly fantasies about the day she will finally leave Stiva.

Anna and Vronsky are bored with their new life in Italy. Anna is not socially accepted because she is a mistress and she is too jealous to allow Vronsky to go out to parties on his own. They decide to head back to Russia.

Levin and Kitty visit Nikolai on his death bed and Kitty is so sweet to him as he dies that Levin falls deeper in love with her. She tells him she is pregnant as the muffled figure takes Nikolai in his arms and off stage.

Anna goes to Betsy for help because Karenin won’t let her see her son. On learning that Anna’s divorce is not final Betsy tells her she must be married as soon as possible, or people will stop calling on her and then she leaves her alone. Anna takes morphine from a little bottle
around her neck. She goes to see her son, but she is asked to leave. She goes home heartbroken and begs Vronskey to stay home with her for the night. He refuses and she insists, against his warnings, on accompanying him but society is no longer a nice place for Anna, just as Betsy said. Vronskey takes her home and leaves her there explaining that he needs to be at the club in order to do business deals. Anna takes morpaine again. She takes more as the room begins to spin and she begins hallucinating. In her mind Vronskey and Kitty are dancing, Karenin comes in and leaves over and over. Vronskey comes home to find her high on morphine and begs her to write her husband for a divorce so she can be happy again. She agrees to do so.

Six months later Levin, Stiva, and Vronskey meet up at the club. Stiva can’t believe Levin has never met Anna so Vronskey encourages them to visit her. The scene becomes Anna’s home as she greets them. Levin is immediately taken with her beauty. They have a moment together where we see they could fall in love. Levin returns home and must reassure Kitty he is not in love with Anna. Kitty laments that Anna steals every man she falls in love with.

Anna begins packing a suitcase and tells Vronskey she must get out of the city and into the country as soon as possible. He tells her they need to stay so he can visit his mother the next day, but they will leave as soon as they can. She fights with him about her insecurities. He expresses to her how important her divorce going through is to him, refuses to fight with her, and goes to bed. Anna thinks about killing herself with Morphine.

Stiva begs Karenin for a divorce on Annas behalf. He refuses saying she deserves to suffer the consequences of her actions. Anna keeps taking morphine and decides to go to
Dolly’s to ask for help. She runs into Kitty there and tells her she could have had Levin if she wanted him. Kitty goes into labor.

Anna wanders around the streets high on morphine and struggling with what she should do. She gets on and off the train thinking about killing herself on the tracks, all the while the muffled figure lurks around. At the same time Kitty is trying to deliver a baby. Levin’s focus is split between the two women; he is trying to be there for his wife and at the same time trying to save Anna. The baby is delivered at the same time Anna is enveloped by the train. As the crowd disperses, we see the dark figure is holding Anna in his arms. He takes her away.

The play wraps up with Levin and Kitty looking up to the stars wondering what is to come next. Anna’s spirit comes on stage and links her arm around Levin’s other side, forever solidifying her place in his heart and their continued coexistence.
Concept Statement

Anna Karenina is about love, passion, selfishness, hatred, and forgiveness. It is a play about what you can endure for love. It is a play about societal pressures and how they can pile on top of you. It is also a play about a woman who feels life has gotten away from her and she cannot regain control. It is beautiful and heartbreaking. I knew how important light was going to be to the telling of this story after my first reading of the script. I wanted to use tight area lighting to accentuate the differences in locations and keep the audience moving from place to place with the action.

This play is anything but stark in nature. It was of utmost importance to me to bring the color and life I felt from these characters to the stage. As I thought about the people in this story soft purples and ambers came to my mind along with the sound of trains in the distance, and wind blowing through the trees. I began to think of Anna as the night and Levin as the day. One is life giving, honest, and not shy about his ambitions. The other is sneaky and dishonest but possesses a kind of magnetism which cannot be denied. The sun and the moon are never together but are never truly apart. This became powerful imagery to me as I began my research.
Research

Research for lighting has always seemed abstract to me. It’s not as straight forward as researching for a set design. I always try to allow the research images I am looking through to influence my ideas. I strive to find images that will help solidify the ideas of the script and that also possess a quality of light I want to replicate. The goal is to surround myself with images that bring these characters and this script to life through light, color, and texture.

I began with looking at images of light coming through trees. Some scenes take place outdoors and it was important to me to have those scenes textured in some way. I felt this would be a good place to start because I had so many locations to separate on a unit set. The set had stands of trees on the sides of the stage I knew I would be able to use them to cast some shadows but wanted to be sure it looked authentic as well. I found many striking images of light coming through trees. The most intriguing of them to me were the ones

*Figure 2.1- Trees 1 - Photo by: Anastasiya Romanova*

*Figure 2.2- Trees 2 – Photo by: Henrik Spranz*
that had a lot of shadow. Long shadows made me think of the shadows our actions leave over other people. (Figure 2.1-2.2)

After looking at far too many images of trees I shifted my focus to the moon and the quality of light it creates. I wanted to find research to support the contrast but similarities between the light of day and the light of the night so I could easily explain my ideas. I quickly found photographs and paintings that had beautiful light quality and fueled my vision closer toward what I was looking for. (Figure 2.3-2.4)

I found a painting, (Figure 2.5) that truly brought the ideas of this play to life for me. I used this image as a launching point for creating boundaries between the worlds, bringing the struggle of the light and the dark to the forefront of my mind. In this painting the artist has captured the feeling I wanted the audience to have while watching this play. The feeling I wanted to create through light and shadow. The feeling that no matter how the light prevails there will always be darkness. There will always be shadows you cannot escape. No matter how
happy or loved you are the shadows are ever present fighting for recognition. Even the title of the painting further solidified my ideas about the play.

Armed with research and a solid idea of what I saw the show to be, I stumbled forward into my design.

Figure 2.5 – When the Sun and Moon Collide – Painting by: Osnat Tzadok
Design Process

I was unsure how to begin when I started designing this show. It was my first light design, so my process was being discovered as the design was being envisioned. I was lucky enough to have a set designer, Dwight Camillucci, who was prepared and gave me a set model to work with early in the process. The set consisted of a center dais with a turn table surrounded by trees, it was so open and so light colored I had almost endless options for what I could do. I took pictures of the set model and put them into photo shop to create some early ideas for color and space. From the very beginning I knew I wanted to have a color for Anna and a color for Levin that reflected how I perceived them. (Figures 2.6 -2.7 and Plates 2.1 – 2.4)

Using the full model was very helpful for me in deciding what colors were going to work and what colors were going to make the set look like mud. I met with the costume designer and got her input on what colors she was planning to use as to not wash out the costumes as well.

I was lucky enough to work with a guest director, Laura Gordon, on this project. When I met with her, she expressed her desire to see the play flow seamlessly from scene to scene and agreed with me that we needed to have tight area lighting in order to keep the play moving. We spoke about what she wanted to accomplish with the play and what colors she felt strongly
about using. She did not express any concern about color choices, but she did mention she wanted the play to end with a feeling of hope. She wanted to be sure the play was beautiful and tragic but also have a bright light at the end of the tunnel. This pushed forward my ideas about Anna being the dark, or the moon, and Levin being the light, or the sun.

After our meeting I did some full light renderings in photoshop so the director could get an idea of what I was planning to do. These renderings were very helpful to me because it instilled some confidence in the director that I could make the show what she wanted it to be. She knew this was my first design and she was nervous about what was going to happen. After seeing the renderings, she was visibly more relaxed about what I was going to do with her show. (Figures 2.8- 2.9 and Plates 2.5 – 2.7)

I was encouraged to attend a few rehearsals during the process so I could get a feel for what was going on and have a plan. I attended as many as time would allow, sometimes running in from the shop to watch a movement sequence or something specific happening on the turn table and returning to work. Seeing these rehearsals early in the
development process as well as later when they became more polished was immensely helpful to me. I was able to see what the director was trying to accomplish from the outset.

Again, being my first light design, the process was a little strange for me. I knew what I wanted to do. I had my colors picked and approved. I had my gobos ready to throw some texture on the stage. I then had to wait. I didn’t have much to do in meetings leading up to the project like I do with a set; I just had to wait for the set to be on stage so I could begin executing my vision.
Execution

I have many years of experience working with several different designers at a variety of theatres. I was therefore well prepared to create a plot from which I could execute my vision. I met with my advisor for the show, Bruce Duerden, to speak about a few coverage problems I thought I might have and was eager to get to work on this show that was becoming both exciting and challenging. (Plates – 2.8-2.9)

As we marched forward to the day, a graduate student who was our master electrician for the year dropped out. This left me to lead the lighting team in hanging and circuiting the plot. This was not a huge issue because I have enough prior electrician experience, but certainly added to the stress of my first design. This also added a load to the shop and the paint crew because I was unavailable during many work hours while executing the job of the master electrician.

There were several undergraduate students on the lighting team that were extremely helpful and encouraging even in my own moments of doubt. I printed off from my light plot, one large one containing everything and several small pages broken down into individual lighting positions. These each were distributed to a team of two, this way we could execute the hang in the two hours that were scheduled. We had enough of the plot hung and color dropped into the lights in time to release the crew. I stayed late during this call to adjust a few things and hang a couple lights we had not gotten done. I tried to keep their calls to a minimum so I would get help and positive attitudes when I needed them the most. This strategy helped me in the long run when I had to have a last-minute call during tech week. (Plates – 2.10-2.12)
I had scheduled twelve hours dark time in the theatre to program my show before tech began. I scheduled extra hours because it was going to take me some time to get used to the lighting control board and I wanted to be as prepared as possible for tech. I attended a rehearsal the night before we started tech to try some of the light cues and see what the director thought of where the show was headed. The result was not what I had hoped for.

I ended up having to pull almost all the color from the front of house and cove positions after it was brought to my attention it was making everything ‘too amber’. The amber light was causing everyone to look orange and for the show to have an overall yellowing effect. One hundred percent more face light was requested by the director because the actor’s faces were lit too dimly. I was up and down the ladder from the cove to the booth more times than I can count that night refocusing almost every light I had in the air. I was very happy there was an invitation to attend the rehearsal that night because adjustments were made the entire evening and ended up staying late to make even more changes before tech the next morning.

The largest adjustment to make before the next morning was all about color. As aforementioned, most of the color in the front of house and cove positions had been pulled which left a lot of no color conventional lights washing out the set. I made an important discovery that night while trying to find balance in all the cues. I began using the LED overhead instruments to paint the set and conventional front light to lift actors and select pieces out of the wash. This changed my mind on a lot of what I had already spent many hours programming because I was able to use whatever color I wanted on the set and still make the actors and costumes look fabulous.
Entering the first tech rehearsal for this show was an extremely stressful morning for me. I had never been in a position at a tech where everyone would be waiting on me. I was as prepared as possible and we began. We were off to the races. The very slow races. I had to refer to my plot every time I was asked for an adjustment because I had changed my entire front of house focus the night before. More time of this tech was spent on the director walking up to the back of the house to talk to me than was spent on anything else. We had only made it through a few scenes before lunch time and I tried to get myself more organized over the break. We didn’t make it through the show that day and I had a long list of things to get done before the following Monday. Sneaking into the theatre on Sunday to do several hours of notes left me ready to finish the show the next day.

The Monday evening of tech I changed my mind about a lot of how I wanted to end the show. I saw the way the cast was using the turn table and the way the movement sequence of the scene had been directed. I spoke with the director extensively that evening because the ending sequence of the show was so important to us both. After we got through the show I stayed until one in the morning to do a fresh list of notes and execute some new ideas. The pattern of adding and taking lights and cues continued until opening day, and the show was added to the history books. (Plates – 2.13 -2.23)
Reflection

This show was extremely rewarding to work on. I felt challenged because I was learning something new and I had a team to work with that was very supportive through the process. I was happy with the product and so was the director. She was so easy to work with and was upfront about what she wanted to see onstage. At the same time, she was more than willing to watch me experiment and see what we could come up with together.

This show changed my whole perspective on light design and how it should be approached. Going forward I will be much more prepared for the tech process because I will not make the same mistakes. Having to change most of my color and focus the night before we started the tech process was detrimental to the speed at which we were able to get things done. If I had not changed my plot the night before things would have moved at a much quicker pace and we could have added more polish in the end.

My biggest take away from this show is the breakthrough I had with use of LED and conventional instruments together. Using the versatile LED lights to paint the set allowed for me to change color at a moment’s notice, while the conventional lighting enhanced the costumes and lifted the action of the play so the audience knew what where they were supposed to look. I also learned how much the angle at which a light hits a person, or an object not only affects the shadows cast by that person or object but also affects the overall mood. The angle of the light can bring a sense of stress and anxiety, a sense of comfort; even a sense of danger can be achieved just from the angle of the light.
Plate 2.1 – Anna thumbnail 3 – Anna scene Levin watching

Plate 2.2 – Anna thumbnail 4 – Levin’s estate
Plate 2.3 – Anna thumbnail 5 – Anna and Karenin at home

Plate 2.4 – Anna thumbnail 6 – Ethereal trees
Plate 2.5 – Final rendering 3 – Anna and Levin
Plate 2.6 – Final rendering 4 - Anna and Karenin at home
Plate 2.7 – Final rendering 5 – Tree shadows
Plate 2.8 – Light Plot
Plate 2.9 – Focus Areas

Truss

Plate 2.10 – Truss breakout
Plate 2.11 – Front of house breakout

Plate 2.12 – Electrics breakout
Plate 2.14 – Anna and Levin
Plate 2.15 – Levin and Kitty
Plate 2.16 – Kitty at ice rink
Plate 2.17 – Anna dances with death
Plate 2.18 – Anna waits
Plate 2.19 – Three scenes at once
Plate 2.20 – Morphine dream
Plate 2.21 – Anna is shunned by society
Plate 2.22 – Anna Dies
Plate 2.23—Final moment of play
CHAPTER 3

SET DESIGN

*A Lie of the Mind*

*Play Synopsis*

*A Lie of the Mind* is a heavy hitting play by Sam Shepherd. When you crack open one of his plays you are never sure what to expect but you know you are in for a ride. This is a story about codependency, denial, and the cycle of abuse. None of the characters in this play have ever had a good example of a healthy relationship. They continue to treat one another badly and accept bad treatment because it is their perception of normal. Through the course of the action we jump back and forth between the childhood home of Jake, in California, and the childhood home of Beth, in Montana. Scenes do not happen simultaneously but on occasion Jake will see Beth as he talks about or thinks about her.

At the top of the show we find ourselves in the middle of a phone call between Jake and his brother Frankie. Jake is at a pay phone somewhere and tells Frankie that he and Beth got into a fight. He says he beat her so badly he thinks he may have killed her and hangs up the phone.

Scene two we are in the hospital with Beth and her brother Mike. She is in bandages and it is clear she has suffered a brain injury. She briefly tries to talk to Mike who encourages her to get some rest.
In Scene three we come to a hotel room where Jake and Frankie have met up to talk about what happened. They still think Beth is dead. Jake tells his brother about how jealous he was becoming of one of Beth’s coworkers and we can see he is losing his temper again. They talk about Jake’s short fuse from the time he was a kid and how violence has always been what he turns to. Jake talks about how he is afraid of losing Beth even though she is already gone. He talks about how he feels like his whole life is over because she is not in it and wishes he would have felt this way about her more when she was around. He starts to feel panicky and must lay down. Frankie stands guard while he sleeps.

Scene four puts us back in the hospital with Beth and Mike. He is trying to get Beth to learn how to walk again. She is trying to talk about Jake, asking Mike not to hurt him because she loves him. Mike is shocked that she is talking about how she still loves the man who tried to kill her and yells at her to stop talking about him. The scene ends with Beth professing that no one can stop him from being in her heart, not even herself.

In scene five we are back in the hotel room with Jake. We meet his mother, Loraine, and his sister Sally. Jake has lost a lot of weight and won’t eat. As he wakes up he mistakes Sally for Beth and grabs hold of her wrist lecturing her and hurting her. Loraine beats him with her shoe till he lets go of Sally. Loraine blames all of Jake’s problems on everything but his upbringing; she is in denial that her son could have turned out to be such a bad person. She says she will take him home and nurse him back to health like she always has when he has been in trouble.

Scene six brings us back to the hospital with Beth’s parents. Her father, Baylor, has no patience for and no understanding of the situation his daughter is in. He has a chip on his
shoulder about being in the company of more educated people than himself and is anxious to leave the hospital. Her mother, Meg, is very complacent and has a general misunderstanding of just about everything. She is heavily reliant on Baylor and cannot remember who Jake is or whether or not she was at the wedding. The scene wraps up with Baylor leaving Meg to ride back home with Mike, and Beth waking up to her mother.

The seventh and final scene of act one brings us to the childhood room of Jake. Lorraine has not changed anything about his room. We learn in this scene that Jake’s dad was a pilot in the Airforce. He also ran around on his mother a lot and they had to follow him place to place. Jake asks to see his father’s memorabilia Loraine had saved for him. A flag, jacket, some medals, and his ashes are brought out from under the bed. It is revealed that Jake’s Dad was hit by a truck in the street when he was drunk, and Jake was there. Jake denies this and yells at his mom to leave him alone. Now alone Jake puts on his father’s jacket and wraps himself in the flag. He imagines Beth; we see her in a sexy dress oiling her shoulders and chest. As he approaches her, she is gone. The act wraps up with Jake opening the box of his father’s ashes and blowing some of them out of the box.

Act two begins in The Montana house of Baylor and Meg. Beth has been brought home to recover. Through the beginning of the scene we learn that Meg has always done whatever Baylor has told her to do. This is reflected in the way she lets Mike handle the situation when Frankie shows up, he is the man and will do whatever he sees fit. We learn that Mike has sent Frankie home telling him he is not welcome. Baylor, out hunting, shoots Frankie taking him for a deer in the woods. He comes in dragging Frankie along and puts him on the couch shot
through the leg. Baylor decides Frankie can stay there instead of going to the hospital to make sure he stays alive. Mike storms out to the shack.

In the next scene we pop back over to Jakes childhood home. The scene opens with Jake and his sister Sally talking about how much Jake is like his father. Jake is delusional, he cant remember the death of his father and he thinks his family is plotting against him to make him suffer longer. By the end of the scene Jake asks Sally to help him escape so he can go see if Beth is alive.

Back with Beth and Frankie, Beth has her shirt off for some reason and is rubbing Frankie’s Leg. He is afraid someone is going to come in and pleads with her to put her shirt back on. She talks about what it might have been like if she was in love with Frankie instead of Jake. Mike comes in with a dead deer and informs everyone that it is snowing to hard for anyone to leave and that the phone lines are frozen.

Act two wraps up with a short scene between Sally and Jake. Jake has convinced Sally to tuck herself into his bed to try and fool his mother that he has not gone for as long as possible. She agrees though she knows it will not work. Jake tells her he can feel Beth inside him and that every moment he is waiting for a voice or a scream. The act end with a blackout and an offstage scream of Jakes name from Beth.

Act three begins with Loraine tucked into Jake’s bed ad Sally bringing her soup, mocking her. They talk extensively about Jake and his father’s similarities. Sally reveals to her mother that she and Jake found their father and were with him when he died in Mexico. Jake left him drunk in the middle of the road and Sally could not move him, so he got hit by a truck. Loraine
tells her there was nothing she could have done because her father was a lost, hopeless man anyway. They talk about burning everything in the house and having a fresh start.

The next scene opens with Meg and Baylor. We can see from their conversation again what kind of relationship they have, and we can see where Beth learned what kind of relationship to accept. Mike bursts in saying he has Jake tied up as a prisoner outside and he is going to bring him in to apologize to Beth.

The final scene of the play is a split scene between both houses. Scenes do not happen simultaneously, but Jakes childhood room should still be visible though the course of the scene happening in Montana. We begin with Loraine and Sally talking about how much pain they have lived through in the house. They start by deciding what they are going to keep as they leave but, in the end, decide to burn down the house with everything in it. They pile some trash into a can, set it ablaze, and leave. As the fire in the can burns Mike brings Jake onstage on his knees directing him with reins like he is livestock. Baylor is more interested in taking the flag that was wrapped around Jake and being sure it is treated properly than he is in the man who tried to kill his daughter. Mike is frustrated that no one cares he has Jake on his knees because no one seems to be reacting to his presence. Beth is more concerned about getting a blanket for Frankie. Mike leaves enraged that no one cares. Beth does not recognize Jake anymore and he tells her to stay with Frankie. Jake leaves while, Meg and Baylor fold the flag. As the play ends, Meg makes a comment about a fire burning in the snow.
Concept Statement

As I read the script, I was a little disappointed with what I perceived my options to be. It is a relatively realistic drama and I felt limited. It was important to me to not have this set be hyper realistic, but I did not want to pull the show away from the ultimate themes the playwright was driving toward.

I wanted to create a space that seemed as incomplete as the lives of the characters that live in it, while also having a space that the audience could easily see as a home. I wanted to be sure the audience did not think the characters were living normal stable lives. At the same time, I wanted them to be able to see themselves in the story and not be distracted by the set.

I feel very strongly that codependency and the cycle of abuse are at the heart of this play. Both things leave the people who live them with spaces inside that will never be filled. I wanted the insides of these people to be reflected the environment they lived in.

With a lot of ideas for what this show could become I started my research.
Research

I began my research with images of apartments and homes from the time period and the locations of the homes in the play. I became bored very quickly with the minimal design options I felt I might end up having for this play.

I redirected my focus of the script to what I felt was the major themes of codependency and broken homes. I started researching images of paintings and sculptures, hoping something would send me in an interesting direction. I was most attracted to art that had a struggle between two sides. (Figures 3.1-3.2)

*Figure 3.1 – Yellow Circle – Painting by: Laszlo Moholy-Nagy

*Figure 3.2 – Fighting Forms – Painting by: Franz Marc*
This led me to pictures of plants that wind and twist around each other. I was fascinated with how one plant would not survive without the other plant but is killing the plant it needs. Beautiful parasites. The way these plants survive reflected the type of relationship Jake and Beth have. They have twisted around each other until one has begun to stifle the others existence. (Figures 3.3-3.4)

After finding some good evocative images and solidifying my ideas a bit more, I refocused my research back to architecture and perhaps the rooms these characters would live in. (Figures 3.5-3.6)
Figure 3.5 – Montana House – Photo by: Louis

Figure 3.6 – Messy room – Photo by: Daria Shevtsova
Design Process

When the play was originally produced it was in a large theatre with two different sets on either side of the stage. The theatre we were producing this play in is a very small theatre, measuring only twenty-one feet wide by fourteen feet high so having two different sets was not really an option. The playwright speaks about the importance of the void between the two spaces. The more I thought about these characters the more important this representation of a void was to the intent of the playwright and to the reality of the play. There is a separation and a blankness in these characters and what they hope to get out of life and what they expect from each other. It is such a heavy hitting story I was hesitant to shove it into a regular apartment.

I jumped into doing sketches and rough white models. I was trying to discover a shape that would encompass the codependency I had discovered to be important in the play. At the same time, I didn’t want the space to feel complete. I went through several different renditions in the white model and sketching faze of this design before approaching the director, Adriane Moore. She was abroad teaching for a semester and I did not want to bother her with anything until there was a solid idea to build on.

(Figures – 3.7 – 3.8 and plates 3.1 -3.2)
I met with my advisor on the show, Shawn Fisher and showed him some of the things I had come up with and he encouraged me to bring it back into realistic architecture a bit more. I went back to my sketch book and model box; what the set was eventually going to be started to bring itself about. (Figure – 3.9 – 3.11)
I moved into a color model and emailed Moore for a phone call time. I sent her images of my sketches and the color model before the phone call. (Figure 3.12) I explained to her my conceptual idea of having the scenes happen in a shared space. The actors would ignore the hand props that were a part of the opposite scenes but would share the furniture and the doorways. She was concerned with the playable space the design had left her with and she was also nervous that the audience would not understand what was going on if we didn’t have a bit more of a change in the space between houses.

As I explored ways to make the same shape happen with the adjustments the director had requested, I came up with the idea of having the outside walls flip around. I also cut a lot of the platforming I originally wanted because of the concern for playing space. We had another chat over the phone, and we came up with something we both liked. (Figure – 3.13-3.15)
The direction team and I had a bit of a back and forth when it came to the roof piece I had designed. I explained the representation of the void and the overshadowing feeling this piece will give the entire show. These characters live in a shadow of what they could have. They are casting a shadow on each other’s lives and passions so we should have a pillar looming over them. I was very lucky to have a director who trusted me and allowed me to move forward with the giant roof piece.
The light designer, Ebony Williams, had some major concerns about the piece as well. She and I had several meetings to discuss what we could to get around it. I gave her free use of all the light bulbs that were hanging from the piece, dictating only one or two moments of their use. She was able to work around the roof piece and use the bulbs very effectively.
Execution

As we moved into the build for this show I was nervous. Not only was it my first realized design, I was also the Paint Charge. All things considered we were in really good shape. I was able to execute my drafting in a timely manner and the build was beginning. (Plates – 3.3 – 3.7)

One of the biggest challenges of this set was the timeslot of the season. It was the first build after Christmas break and there is always a bit of a time crunch. People are trying to get back into workflow and get used to the stress of regular life again. During the build process there was another graduate student pushing to begin his set builds early. Because of his relationship with the technical director the planning of my show was pushed to the back burner. Some build time was wasted doing storage trips for shows that were months away. I spoke with the technical director about my concerns and the attention was shifted back to where it should have been. (Figures – 3.16 – 3.18)

The painting of the set went quite well. I had an excellent assistant, Sterling Brenna, who was attentive and intuitive. The most time-consuming part of the paint process was painting
the floor. We had a seven-color wood floor and the dry time between layers was exceptional. (Figures – 3.19 – 3.22 and Plate 3.8)

A we closed in on load in week our technical director suffered a family loss and was going to need to leave town before the set was completely installed. These situations arise in life and there is nothing you can do about it. I was much more concerned for him and his family than I was about the fate of a show. During the same week, the other shop graduate student had to be out of town interviewing at a university for a potential position in the coming year. Again, these things pop up and you cannot hold unforeseen circumstances against anyone.
I was very lucky to be working with a team that was willing to rally around me in a time when the managers they were used to having call the shots were out of town. Together we were able to get the set installed on time. There were a few parts of the set that the install had not been planned for. We put our heads together and were able to hurdle these problems. We got the back wall hung up and supported as well as getting the roof up in the air. I was impressed with the attention the shop staff kept on their work even though time was moving very slowly. The breaks are on when a plan had to be conceived and executed simultaneously. Because I was now the technical director, set designer, and paint charge I was a little stressed going into tech. (Figures – 3.23 – 3.24)

To my surprise, tech went very smoothly, and the show opened without a hitch. The director was happy, and I had very few notes considering the level of responsibility I had during that week. (Plates – 3.9 – 3.13)
Reflection

Working on this play was a very rewarding experience. Being at a university is always exciting because you get the opportunity to work on shows that do not get produced very often in the profession. The general public is not always interested in seeing heavily conceptual shows, so we rely on universities and small companies to keep this part of the art alive.

I was extremely lucky to work with a director that was open to an avant-garde non-realistic set. I could have easily been pigeonholed into a realistic setting for both locations, but she was excited to tackle this play in a new way.

The design team was also willing to buy into the concept the director and I had grasped onto. The light designer did an excellent job working around the roof piece but also making the icon I wanted it to be in other scenes.

I learned the importance of planning and communicating your plan to your team during this experience. When the people who know and make the plan must leave and they have not practiced effective communication, it brings the rest of the show to a halt. The team I had underneath me during the install and tech of this show are the ones who made this happen. Keeping your team happy and positive even when it seems the normal structure is collapsing is the most important thing we can do as theatre practitioners and managers.

Moving into my future I will take the teamwork, the communication, as well as the positivity under uncertainty. This show turned out beautiful and I could not have done it alone.
Plate 3.1 – Lie thumbnail 2

Plate 3.2 – Lie white model 2
Plate 3.3 – Lie Ground Plan
Plate 3.4 – Lie wall A and B drafting

Plate 3.5 – Lie wall D and E drafting
Plate 3.6 – Lie drafting wall C and platform

Plate 3.7 – Lie drafting roof piece
Plate 3.8 – Floor final treatment
Plate 3.9 – Production Photo – Montana Side
Plate 3.11 – Production photo – Single Light Bulb
Plate 3.12 – Production photo – Flag center stage
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