When you are reading a book your mind gets to create the world that the author has described—your imagination decides how Hogwarts, Gatsby’s mansion, or Boo Radley’s house look, and no other would ever look just like yours. When a scenic designer reads a play, much like anyone else, they get to picture the world the playwright has described in their story—the only difference is: they have the privilege of their vision being brought to life for everyone else to see just as they had imagined. That is how I describe scenic design: a piece of my mind—my vision of the story—being brought to life on stage.

I have been working towards my senior comprehensive project being scenic design since sophomore year. The fall of my junior year I served as assistant scenic designer to Susan Gratch on shows *The Many Deaths of Danny Rosales* and *U-R-U*. One of the main requirements to get a design comps proposal approved is assisting in the design area on an (ideally) Oxy production. I knew I wanted to pursue scenic design as my comps project after taking the Vectorworks class the spring of my sophomore year. For our final project in the class, we designed either scenery or lighting for a play to demonstrate the skills learned using Vectorworks to create our designs. Even though I had past experience with lighting and thoroughly enjoyed it, it was very apparent to me that I wanted to design a set in Vectorworks—thinking of potential scenery was when my imagination took off. I was able to work on a conceptual design I had worked on the semester before in Theater 101, *Topdog/Underdog*, which I had not ever expected to re-visit.

My meetings with Susan, the professor, which were meant to aid in any questions I had about the program, led to a brief but personalized lesson in design along the way. She asked me questions that encouraged me to push the boundaries of my mind and emboldened me to tear down the walls I had built up for myself which limited my design—something she still reminds
me to do today. With a question as simple as, “now think about, what if you rotated the whole room?” I felt like my whole world had been rotated. The bounds of reality only existed within my head—that is the marvel of theatricality—and I was limiting myself. David Korins, scenic designer of broadway shows: *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Hamilton*, and more, poses the question, “what would happen if we started to tweak those architectural standards to get what we wanted?” in his TedTalk, “3 Ways to Create Space That Moves You.” As I continue my journey through design, I try to keep this question at the forefront of my mind: how can I alter the world to demonstrate the feelings I want the audience to experience as they watch the actors interact with the scenery.

For me, doing scenic design for my comprehensive project was the perfect opportunity to explore both myself and my field in an environment I knew would be safe and encouraging. I had the opportunity to work on the design of a professional scale production in an academic environment—the time to be guided through a difficult task by a mentor while working with a team that understood my status as a student and my lack of professional experience. My mentor, Susan Gratch, has helped me through every step of the way, and has treated every experience as a chance to teach me something for my future. I am pursuing scenic design for a career, and it is obvious that everything I have learned through this project will be used again in my lifetime and serve as the foundation from which my knowledge base can grow.

I am scenic designing Occidental College’s *Men on Boats*, written by Jaclyn Backhaus, and directed by Deena Selenow. *Men on Boats* tells the story of the first government sanctioned expedition to the Grand Canyon, or the “Big Canyon” as the men call it. The play calls for a cast that excludes cisgendered white men, who would be the true historical participants of the expedition. Much like the musical *Hamilton*, *Men on Boats* asks the theater industry to allow
those who were refused an opportunity in the past a chance to participate in said story today. I had the pleasure of working with creative team: Diana Wyenn (Choreographer), Jenny Foldenauer (Costume Designer), Adam Roy (Lighting Designer), and John Zalewski (Sound Designer).

My design for *Men on Boats* is my first fully realized design and will be the beginning of my portfolio as a designer. I hope to gain as much knowledge as I possibly can throughout this project—in the craft, as a professional, and as an artist. I wish to learn the thought process a scenic designer goes through and how they bring their vision to life. I want to see what it is like working on a creative team made up of professionals. As a professional, I want to learn how to navigate conversations and criticisms intelligently while remaining respectful and enthusiastic. Finally, I want to grow as an artist; to gain confidence in my ideas and ability, and to develop my style—my uniqueness as a designer.

The design process started when I received the script. My first read through was solely as an audience member. A designer once told me to always put away your design brain the first time you read the story—to experience it yourself first. Afterwards, my next read through was when I began to look at the story through a scenic design lens. Using post it notes, I would write questions and thoughts as they arose throughout the story. Questions for the director, such as how she intended the scenery to aid in the telling of the story? Other observations such as, needing the cyc since many of the stage directions dedicate time to describing the sky, so it would be likely that those descriptions would want to be shown. My third read through was a scene break down consisting of act-scene, location, characters present, and any additional notes.
Most of my initial thoughts centered around the grandiose nature of the Grand Canyon and the movement of the show. It is easily discernible from a single read through of the play that this show calls for movement, but I wondered if the director wanted that movement from the design (scenery/lighting/sound), the acting, or a combination of both. I also wondered if the director cared more about displaying the astonishment often attached to seeing the Grand Canyon—considered one of the seven natural wonders of the world—or rather, to show the feeling of imprisonment that I drew from Powell’s men.

The first meeting with the director, Deena, consisted of me, Adam, Jenny, John, and Susan. This was the meeting where the director’s vision could be depicted and discussed, which could provide the initial path for the growth of the designer’s ideas. Deena explained that she gathered inspiration from both pageantry and dioramas, and she encouraged the designers to lean into the “yee olden time” feel of the story. She liked the idea of creating things out of imagination rather than money, as is often seen in children’s pageant shows. Deena spoke of the “simplicity of the grand spectacle” when speaking of the Grand Canyon. It needed to be a grand canyon, but that did not mean the production of it had to be staggering, but rather just the idea behind the design. The most enlightening comment came at the end of the meeting when Deena established that within the show the movement would be hyper stylized, the acting super earnest, and the design should be both super earnest and stylized.

The next step in the process was doing the research. I broke my research down into two categories, historical versus inspirational. I started with Deena’s personal inspiration as a stepping stone. For pageantry I found a Thanksgiving Pageant put on by Jimmy Kimmel Live (as seen on the left).
The image on the right shows my favorite photo for diorama inspiration. I enjoyed both the cartoon/artistic aspects seen in pageantry and I loved the differentiation between foreground and background often seen in dioramas. Dioramas frequently have a 2D artistic background and a realistic 3D foreground composed of taxidermy. It reminded me of Deena’s hyper realistic vs hyper stylized comment. This then lead me to look at a mixture of art done of the Grand Canyon for more inspiration, and one piece in particular stuck with me throughout the process.

This artwork was painted by Glen S. Hopkinson and published in “Into the Unknown: John Wesley Powell’s 1869 Colorado River Exploring Expedition Illustrated Map & Adventure Anthology” in 2018. This painting has a clear divide on the foreground and the background, and there is a difference in the style of painting for each. The foreground is more shadowed and fairly
realistic, whereas the background allows for more light, brighter colors, and less defined edges—a more overall impressionistic depiction of the canyon.

I then began to look into actual photographs of the Grand Canyon for accuracy. I was even able to take a trip to the Grand Canyon myself to see what exactly I would be designing. The main things I noticed when looking at photos of the Grand Canyon was, when it was a photo from inside the canyon, there was often a distinction between foreground and background, like in the artwork shown previously as well as in dioramas,

and depending on what time of day the photo was taken there were massive differences in the coloring of the canyon.
When I went to the Grand Canyon, the colors seemed more subdued and contained more greens than I expected (as seen on the left). There is an idealistic image of the Grand Canyon, that I think many people picture when they envision the Grand Canyon, that is displayed in the photo on the right with the vibrant warm tones on the walls. This is still an accurate representation of the Grand Canyon, it is just leaning into the exaggeration/idealization of it. I leaned more towards the stylized idea for my design.

I was able to gather extremely accurate research for the boats on my trip to the Grand Canyon as there were actual boats used during an expedition on display at the park. I tried to be precise in my design for the boats, because I wanted them to be historically accurate since they would be part of the hyper realistic foreground.

I chose to only do the front of the boats; although I wanted accuracy, my main focus needed to be the production, and I thought having the actors weighed down with carrying full scale boats would affect their movement capabilities. Despite the photo, I chose to make the writing on my boats cursive because I thought it felt more “olden times,” as Deena liked.

Another form of historical research I took part in was looking for literary inspiration in Powell’s journal. Some of Powell’s descriptions of the Canyon went as:
“The details of structure can be seen only at close view, but grand effects of structure can be witnessed in great panoramic scenes,”
“Its colors, though many and complex at any instant, change with the ascending and declining sun,” and “It has infinite variety, and no part is ever duplicated.”

Finally Powell claimed, “You cannot see the Grand Canyon in one view, as if it were a changeless spectacle from which a curtain might be lifted”—I had to figure out how to do exactly as he claimed you could not, and it was a hard challenge indeed (Powell 379-397). Powell’s journal granted me the opportunity to see the Grand Canyon through his eyes, which showed me how one of the men on the expedition felt—a real life demonstration of the emotion I wanted to convey.

Lastly, I looked into photographs taken on Powell’s second expedition in 1871. These photos showed me how the men interacted as a group and what occurrences transpired in their lives throughout the expedition. It provided a feeling of the bond that was formed between the men as they went down the river. It also was helpful for research into boats, oars, and other props for the campfire scenes.
The next step in the process was finding ways to make the vision in my head visible to the director, because they cannot read your mind, a constant issue for me throughout the entire process. I started with rough sketches of the ideas I had. Susan encouraged me to sketch actual photos of the Grand Canyon I was drawn to, and find the design elements of the Canyon I wanted to emphasize. Then I could incorporate these things into my stage design, making my sketches a more accurate depiction of the Canyon. This lead to multiple thumbnail sketches of my different ideas.

I wanted to see what a change in levels would look like because I thought it would be interesting for rapids and waterfall scenes. I thought the perspective often created by the walls of the Canyon was alluring. I wanted to find a way to make the walls seem imprisoning but vast at the same time, which I think the perspective aspect helped achieve. The smallest walls were always near the men, they couldn’t escape, and the back walls could be the massive structures that are so amazing about the Grand Canyon. I originally thought there would be more action on the canyon walls so I incorporated ladders into my set for the actors to use to get on platforms hidden behind the walls based on Deena’s previous mention of multi purposing things and a tip from Susan. Susan suggested to build the ladders into my set rather than trying to hide them. She stated, “hiding them takes away their power.” I also tried to give options for how rapids/banks/portage scenes might be displayed using the rocks of the Canyon other than the walls. I wanted to provide rough ideas for the campfire and the reservation look as well.
When Deena saw these sketches it was a lot easier for her to gather her own opinions since she had something visual in front of her. She was not interested in playing with large level changes, platforms behind walls, or flying things in or out, she stated, “it is what it is, and what we can do with action.” She really loved the perspective look, V shaped drawings using the depth and shape of the walls. (Perspective using depth seen in sketches 1, 2, 5, & 6—V shaped walls seen in sketches 1, 4, & 6). She also enjoyed the flat line often found at the top of the canyon shown in sketch number 10. The perspective look also provided more downstage area for Deena to block movement and action on, which she was very drawn to.

The meeting ended with me casually mentioning I was reminded of corrugated cardboard when I thought of texture for the walls. Deena fell in love with this idea and ran fast and far with it, and keeping up proved to be quite difficult, which Deena had warned me about in the first meeting. She said, “I see things and I fall in love with it and I want to keep it.” There was a
portion of the process when I felt like my image of cardboard that was for inspiration had turned into what the final “vision” was, which I had not intended. My goal had always been to design the Grand Canyon, not cardboard walls and I had a difficult time navigating conversations where I wished to pull back on an idea I had presented. Jenny later enlightened me that unless I am willing to fully commit to an idea, I should not present it like so.

I then moved on to making preliminary models, because it was apparent Deena preferred to work with a visual representation of my ideas. The discussions could only go so far because she needed it to be shown to her. My first set of models used corrugated cardboard because it was an easy material for me to get my hands on to use as an example, and as I stated before, its texture had been a source of inspiration for me. I felt like the corrugations looked like the striations of color and texture seen in the Grand Canyon. I offered some models with a slight level change that would emphasize the triangle perspective of the river Deena liked, suggested boulders that could be used during rapid scenes and be multi purposed for storage on stage, and a minimal set focusing only on the walls.

When Susan saw this picture, she quickly warned me that my walls were not to scale. She reminded me that Deena fell in love with things she was presented so I should not present her something that would not be possible, and it was not possible for our theater to sustain walls that
tall. I had not spent much time thinking about it because, to me, it was a preliminary model, but Susan’s advice proved to be very beneficial. This led me to retry my preliminary model with walls to scale and also to play with alternating the direction of the corrugations. I also spent more time peeling off the paper showing more corrugations. Furthermore, I took scaling down my walls as an opportunity to play with an idea Deena had previously liked, a flat top for the walls allowing for a visible line of sky above them. The picture below is an example from the second set of model pictures, which I showed Deena. Overall I think she enjoyed the pictures, and she absolutely adored the corrugated cardboard.

After I had an idea that the director loved on a model, I had to figure out how to scale the idea to the size of Keck stage. Finding a material just like corrugated cardboard was onerous, because Deena was so in love with cardboard it was difficult to explain that I did not intend to actually use cardboard on stage, but rather, it was my inspiration for the look I was aiming for. I wanted the same effect corrugated cardboard gave six inches from your face, but from thirty feet away on a stage. I began to think large scale. Susan provided a great source for ideas, installation art, which showed me what things would look like to scale. I initially was really drawn to wood, like pallets. It felt organic and recycled, two things Deena liked, and I thought you could still gain the striated look with how you stacked it.
However, when I presented the idea of using wood, Deena was not interested in the idea at all. She stated that by using wood we created a metaphor that she was not intending—“it’s a boat within a boat.” She said I was going in the right direction with the feelings of organic and recyclable materials, but I needed to find something that felt more like cardboard.

At the beginning of this process I really struggled with letting go of ideas. I would get excited for them, and it hurt when they were turned down. I think it is a really difficult balance to be enthusiastic about the things you present, but also be willing to let them go at a moment’s notice. Jenny taught me that you have to let things roll off your back. She and Susan told me that sometimes you will have spent a lot more time and effort on something, and it still could get cut even later in the process, and that of course it can be disappointing, but it is all part of the job.

It probably took me a bit too long, but eventually I moved on completely from wood. The set would be built out of wood, but it could not look like it was. I started thinking of other materials that gave an organic feeling. I thought of fabric or paper. Both of these reminded me of Deena’s initial inspiration from pageantry. These ideas, however, felt too far from cardboard, they may have conveyed similar natural looks, but they would not convey a cardboard look. I turned to friends, Adam and Rachel, with my problem: how to I make cardboard 10 times bigger? Both presented great ideas, and finally, Rachel thought of corrugated tin roofing.
Although corrugated tin itself did not feel organic or recycled, it could convey the look of cardboard, which did have those feelings.

My conversation with Adam and Rachel reminded me that not all ideas can come solely from your head. You have to look out into the world and use what you see to your own advantage—the cool building you walk by could have molding that you put somewhere in a set used in a completely different way. Whether people present ideas that you use or not, the conversations can spark new ideas, which can lead you to the final vision. It is important to look for inspiration and creativity in all facets of your life.

Once I knew the material that could bring cardboard to scale on stage, I then had to figure out how to actually bring the vision to life. I started in on working drawings in Vectorworks. Working drawings are the most technical part of the process in my opinion. I have to take the design apart piece by piece and make sure I let the shop know exactly what I want on stage so they can accurately build it for me. I started with creating the 3D version of my set on Keck Theater in the software. Throughout the process I would show Deena snapshots of what it would look like. I think Deena struggled a bit still with visualizing it through the software, but it still helped her envision the spacing more.

For me, figuring out exactly where to place the walls on the stage was a big challenge. I knew I wanted three sets of walls, but I had to figure out how much space to leave between them for entrances and exits by the actors; also, Adam needed space for side light boom stands, so lighting needed to be accounted for as well. I knew that the most upstage set of walls had to be under a lineset because they were so tall they would need to be tied in from the bottom and top. I also needed to avoid the linesets that were being used for electrics or other permanent things.
There were also the 3’ jacks that would have to be attached to the back of the flats for support which would impede entrance pathways. Finally, everything had to be in front of the black scrim because I intended to use it.

At first, I had settled on a spacing with the most down stage set of walls underneath lineset 7, but this felt very far away from the audience to me. It did not seem to have the intimidating imprisoning feeling I had hoped to give off towards the audience to help them relate to the men. The walls just felt like a background piece—the men were not in the canyon, they were in front of it. However, due to how linesets were already being used, my only other option would have been to place the first set of walls underneath the 2nd lineset moving them about 6 feet downstage. This placement would also eliminate the entrance pathway from in front of the first set of walls because of the proscenium edge. Therefore, the men would always have to enter from behind walls or I would have to offer a different solution. Susan suggested an entrance from the house in front of the proscenium having the actors use the Shakespeare doors and removing the seating and railing that would be in the way.

This was a decision I could not make without consulting the director so I had to bring all the options to Deena: have the entire set 12 feet away from the audience (including the extended apron distance), always have the actors enter from behind walls, or allow actors to enter through the theater. Deena was not interested in breaking the world for the actors to enter through the theater. I think she was a little disappointed to lose an entrance from in front of the walls, but agreed with my sentiment that moving the scenery that far back felt too far away, so we settled on the placement of the walls so close to the proscenium and the fact that actors would always have to enter from behind the walls. Once I had decided on the placement of the walls I had to
look at sightlines from critical seats to make sure that I placed legs and borders so that the audience could not see backstage, only the black of the masking. This then brought up the question of how wide I wanted the stage to be and how big my walls would need to be to be able to reach far enough off stage to be properly masked.

It was a balancing act to keep the stage so large for a wonder effect and staying within budget, which, unfortunately, I was not very good at. The larger my walls needed to be, the more expensive they would be, especially since my walls would have the added cost of corrugated material that would be used on them. Placements of borders involved a lot of communication with lighting. Overall, I tried to be accommodating to Adam as long as I kept the skyline of the cyc visible above the 18’ tall back walls, which meant the border in front of the third set of walls could not go lower than 20 feet. During tech, Adam and I ended up lowering it 6” to 1’ to help with sightlines for both scenery and lighting—the bottom of the full stage black and the electric needed to be masked better.

Once the placement of everything was decided, and I knew exactly how big my walls needed to be, I began working on elevations. This is where you break down the scenery piece by piece to give the dimensions to the shop. They can only build the set as well as you explain it to them, so it is very important to over explain rather than under explain. Every wall was broken down in this fashion as well as the boats.
I later had to make drawings for crates and the campfire as well. I had not realized that every single thing that was to be built would need a drawing by me. The crates and the campfire were finalized later in the process so I would not have been able to get them done by the Sept. 16th deadline anyways, but I also had not realized that they were my responsibility. Brian made it clear to me that ultimately, I was in charge of everything that made up the environment. Even if I was not the props master or I felt like it was a job for props, I was creating the world and at the end of the day I had to make sure it all fit together. I could not just hand it off to someone else because I felt like it was props—it was all part of my environment, therefore my responsibility. I wish someone had said that as blatantly as Brian did to me at the beginning of the process because then I could have worked harder to try and get all of the drawings in on time, however, it is a lesson I know now to bring forward with me.

Once what was being built was settled, I then had to work through how everything would be painted. I started the process with paint samples on a piece of scrap corrugated tin. This helped me work through colors and potential techniques I could use. I ended up having to scrap all techniques I had practiced, however, because I later learned I would paint the walls while they were standing and many of my practices had been wet work, which would lead to drips on standing scenery. My first attempt (as seen on the left) was full of warm colors, especially reds because Deena and I had agreed on leaning towards the idealized version for coloring the canyon walls. I was frustrated, however, because you could not really see my accents of orange and brown on them.
Susan suggested that I flip my colors and have more brown toned base colors with accents of warm tones such as red striations and orange spray (as seen on the right). Susan also suggested adding accents of cool tones to not only balance out the color scheme, but to also give the lighting designer the opportunity to have cool colors to play with as well. This ended up being a fantastic piece of advice, especially for the campfire scenes at night. I chose to add purple striations and green spray.

I then moved on to building my model where more finalized versions of the paint treatments started being decided. I kept my base tones on the walls towards brown, but with more yellow tones involved than previously. I made my red and purple striations stark against the background. My spray was too large on my model because I struggled getting the specks down to scale, but ultimately the colors were finally decided. When mixing paint to go on the actual scenery I brought my model down to build from directly.
Once the walls were finished, I then moved onto a floor paint treatment. I knew I wanted my floor to use cool tones, one, because the walls were so warm and I wanted the floor to contrast them and for both to balance each other out, but also because I wanted the floor to represent the river. I had to change my original color scheme from my drawings using deep blues, navy, and grays because those were the colors the costumes were going to be.

I did not want to overrule the costumes, the actors needed to be seen against the scenery. Deena was also very encouraging of communication between all the departments. Anything I showed her needed to also be approved by lighting and costumes. I decided to turn the blues more towards green tones. My first attempt (as seen on the left) was not what Deena wanted. She said it felt too streaky and she was worried about too much texture especially with the walls. The lighting designer also requested I toned down some of my colors so the floor would not be quite as bright. My final outcome (as seen on the right) was darker and more straight, blended lines rather than the previous squiggly lines along the perspective view. It also had more browns mixed in along the edges, as well as added orange spray to tone down the green a bit.
Not only did I have to figure out how I wanted the paint to look, I also had to make sure all of the painting actually happened—a major source of anxiety for me. I had not accounted for the lack of a paint crew when thinking of how I wanted the walls painted. The techniques were specialized so I needed to trust who was working on them, and there was an abundance of steps—and that was only for the walls.

The Steps for the walls:
1. Base coat/prime walls done with brush (a roller would not work over corrugated material)
2. Blend together large stripes of background colors: yellow and brown, done with brush (see first photo)
3. Red striations followed by purple striations, done with sponge (see second photo)
4. Striations blended into background colors, done by dabbing a sponge
5. Green spray followed by orange spray (see third photo)

The Steps for the floor:
1. Base coat, done with roller
2. Spray water on working area
3. Paint darker toned striations following perspective, done with fuzzy roller (see photo)
4. Spray orange near middle (lighter areas)
5. Spray purple/brown near edges (to give fade effect)
I had to call in help from friends over the weekend to be able to get all the painting done on time. I needed to be able to spray everything on Monday to do it all at once and the lighting crew needed to be able to focus the side lights as soon as possible. It would not have happened without the help of my friends, and I know now to account for the size of my crew when I am creating the paint samples. I had thought of a job that was entirely too much for just me, and I handled the stress poorly.

While this was happening, the boats designs were being finalized. The shop built the boats in a lightweight fashion using the skeleton I drafted covered with luan slates. Once they were built, it needed to decide how they were to be hung on the actors. Rope was too thin and cut into their shoulders. We decided on about 2 inch thick nylon straps which crossed in the back. Upon use in rehearsal it was discovered that the straps would need to be measured for each boat dependent upon who was carrying it as well as the addition of handles so the actors could have purchase on the boats to help them create the movements they had choreographed. The boats were then wood grained with names later painted on with the help of Courtney Dusenberry, props master.

The campfire, crates, and oars were also being worked out during the weeks leading up to tech. The campfire involved heavy communication and coordination between scenic, lighting, and director. I had to find the grate to be used under which the light bulb had to fit, and then I had to create drawings for the crate that would disguise the grate. Deena did not want the grate to be too tall, which would block the actors, and Adam needed enough space for his bulb to fit, and I needed there to also be space to place logs under it to hide the bulb. The crates were difficult because they needed to be structurally sound for actors to be able to stand and sit on them, but
Deena also wanted them to be lightweight to help the actors carry them. I think they ended up being a little heavy to Deena’s liking, but she understood that the added weight was needed for structural soundness.

Finally, tech week had arrived. Tech week was full of minor notes, mostly painting, which I could not work on until the actors were off my set, so it involved a lot of mornings spent touching up paint. The logs for the fire were created and painted, the boats were painted in semi-gloss and had a dirty water effect added to them, and crate slates were painted after fabric was added to the inside of them.

Tech week was an incredible experience. The world was finally coming together. I had designed walls, but it was John who created the reverb they would cause and Adam who added the sky behind them while also adding texture to my floor making it really look like a river. Seeing the men covered in distressed costumes Jenny had designed and created made me believe that they were covered in the dust from my walls. I was finally seeing what we had all been working towards the entire time, what our collaborative vision had been. Adam was able to amplify my walls in a way only lighting could do. He finally got the vibrant colors I was searching for with my paint by adding his saturated gel colors. I saw the previous choices I had made playing out how I had hoped. The purple striations stood out starkly at night when Adam had blue gel on the walls, and the green of the floor managed to look like any normal ground under amber lights while also looking like the river when Adam added blue and moving textures to represent rapids. What we created as a team seemed so much better than anything any of us could have done alone.
Seeing this final conclusion was something I desperately needed throughout the entire process. In the future, I will remind myself that I should trust the choices I make. Certain choices, such as paint colors, could not be adequately used until tech, but my lack of confidence in them bled through into all of my interactions. I knew what I had hoped the final product would look like, but I was not sure if I could achieve that—which was partly true. I needed to trust my team and wait for them to join the picture. I cannot expect a director to have confidence in my design if I cannot find any for myself, and still Deena was so kind and encouraging. Hopefully, after every design, one’s confidence in their ability grows—I certainly know I am more self assured for my future after completing my design for *Men on Boats*.

I have learned a tremendous amount during this process. Small technical things, like how one should organize their elevations on their working drawings: downstage to upstage and stage right to stage left. I learned how to uphold myself in a conversation where I needed to present my idea but also be willing to listen to others and take their critiques—how to take them and build off of them rather than be frustrated or hurt into a stalemate. I learned the give and take of a shared vision. Although I may have worked hard and may be proud of my ideas, ultimately you have to do what is best for the vision, even if it means starting over. I learned that I have to do props even though they are sometimes the worst. I was reminded over and over again that communication is key and the more open I keep communication, the closer we all can get to finding the best solution for both the production and the vision. I realize that I should *really* work on managing my stress, ask for help when I need it, and make sure to thank those who supported me along the way. Lastly, I learned to believe in my abilities and my work, the hardest lesson to learn and arguably the most fulfilling. I will bring this knowledge and newly-found faith with me.
into my future and I am excited to face new challenges and create new worlds with new people. I am excited to be a scenic designer, and that is what I learned on my senior comprehensive project.
Works Cited


Image Citations
(Appear in the order they are presented in the paper)

Title page. Production Photograph of Act 3 Scene 6. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.


Page 7. Photo of boat used on past expedition down river at Grand Canyon National Park. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.


Page 10. Thumbnail sketches shown to Director. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.


Page 18. Photograph of first attempt paint sample on corrugated material. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.

Page 18. Photograph of second attempt paint sample on corrugated material. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.


Page 20. Photograph of second step of wall painting. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.

Page 20. Photograph of third step of wall painting. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.

Page 20. Photograph of fifth step of wall painting. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.

Page 20. Photograph of third step of floor painting. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.


Page 24. Production Photograph of Act 3 Scene 5. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.

Page 24. Production Photograph of Boats on Set after show. Photograph taken by Cooper Bates.

Page 24. Production Photograph of Act 1 Scene 7. Photograph taken by Zoe Speer.

Appendices for images attached as separate PDF file
Drawings attached as separate PDF file